ḤABĪB AḤMAD MASHHŪR AL-ḤADDĀD

Key to the GARDEN



Translation and Notes by

MOSTAFA AL-BADAWI

KEY TO THE GARDEN

HABIB AḤMAD MASHHŪR AL-ḤADDĀD

REVISED EDITION

Introduction, Translation, & Notes by
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STARLATCH PRESS

TRANSLITERATION KEY

ء	ʾ(1)	ر	r	ف	f
ا	ā, a	ز	z	ق	q(12)
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th(2)	ص	ṣ(6)	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ(7)	ن	n
ح	ḥ(3)	ط	ṭ(8)	ه	h
خ	kh(4)	ظ	ẓ(9)	و	ū, u, w
د	d	ع	ʿ(10)	ي	ī, i, y
ذ	dh(5)	غ	gh(11)		

ﷺ Mentioned after the Prophet Muḥammad's ﷺ name and is translated as "God bless him and grant him peace."

عليه السلام Mentioned after the names of the Prophets and is translated as "peace be upon him."

1. A distinctive glottal stop made at the bottom of the throat. It is also used to indicate the running of two words into one, e. g. *bismi'Llāh*.
2. Should be pronounced like the *th* in *think*.
3. A hard *h* sound made at the Adam's apple in the middle of the throat.
4. Pronounced like the *ch* in Scottish *loch*.
5. Should be pronounced like the *th* in *this*.
6. A slightly trilled *r* made behind the front teeth which is trilled not more than once or twice.
7. An emphatic *s* pronounced behind the upper front teeth.
8. An emphatic *d*-like sound made by pressing the entire tongue against the upper palate.
9. An emphatic *t* sound produced behind the front teeth.
10. An emphatic *th* sound, like the *th* in *this*, but made behind the front teeth.
11. A distinctive Semitic sound made in the middle throat and sounding to a Western ear more like a vowel than a consonant.
12. A guttural sound made at the top of the throat resembling the untrilled German and French *r*.
13. A hard *k* sound produced at the back of the palate.
14. This sound is like the English *h* but has more body. It is made at the very bottom of the throat and pronounced at the beginning, middle, and ends of words.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE
Beirut Edition

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. *We never sent a Messenger before you but that We revealed to him that there is no god but I, so worship Me!* (QURAN, 21:25).

Since Adam, may peace be upon him, one Divine Messenger after another was sent by the One to proclaim that there was no god but He. *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* was the essence of the message, the light of it destroying all idols, whether material or mental, by showing that only the One was Real, while all else was illusion. *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*, there is no god but God, means there is no true god save the One Real God. It also means there is none powerful but the Powerful; there is none able but the Able; there is no provider but the Provider; there is no Slayer, but the Slayer, and so on. This is *Tawḥīd*, Unification, the attribution of all acts, abilities and attributes to the One, and the acknowledgement that everything is created by Him, depends on Him for its continuance, and ultimately returns to Him.

Lā ilāha illa'llāh is the essence of the message of the Quran which is the last Divine Revelation to mankind, the Book that is *a guidance to the people and clear signs of guidance and discernment* (QURAN, 2:185).

May God be praised and thanked, He who revealed the Quran

and sent to mankind, in His mercy, a Messenger saying: "*This is my way. I call to God, clear-sightedly, I and those who follow me*" (QURAN, 12:108).

May God's blessings and peace be upon he who was sent a *mercy to the worlds*, who guides to the straight path and who said: "The likeness of the scholars on earth is like that of the stars that guide in the darkness of land and sea."[1]

Calling the people to their Lord is the function of God's Messengers, the Prophets, may God's blessings and peace be upon them, and of their scholarly heirs, those capable of receiving the Prophetic heritage of knowledge and disseminating it among the people, thereby leading them along the path to salvation and the good pleasure of their Lord. "Scholars are heirs to the Prophets," says the hadith.[2] The full heritage includes the outward knowledge of *Sharī'a* and the inward knowledge which illuminates the hearts and puts them in direct contact with the higher worlds. The Prophet ﷺ indicated in unequivocal terms that this knowledge in its integrity would remain entrusted to his descendants, *Ahl al-Bayt*. A hadith authenticated by Muslim, Tirmidhī and others, states, "I leave among you two weighty things: the first is the Book of God which contains guidance and light.... and [the second is] the people of my house...."[3]

Among the most illustrious of *Ahl al-Bayt* are the 'Alawī *sayyids* of Ḥadramawt. Their ancestor, Imām Aḥmad ibn 'Īsa, known as the "Emigrant", abandoned the land of Iraq, troubled by sedition and civil unrest, for Ḥadramawt. Of his descendants, only those of one of his grandsons, Imām 'Alawī, survive to this day and are still called after him. Their presence in Ḥadramawt transformed it from a land ruled by the heretic Khawārij to one ruled by the orthodox Sunni school of Imām Ash'arī as concerns beliefs and that of Imām Shāfi'ī in legal matters. They soon produced countless scholarly saints who strove to spread the Book of God and maintain the

purity of the Prophetic *sunna* through the vicissitudes of changing times. They traveled east as far as the Philippines, being the main teachers of Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia, and west to East Africa where their influence is still very much in evidence.

Leading ʿAlawīs were originally given the title "Imām." This was later changed into "shaykh," then, by the time of Imām ʿAbdallāh al-Ḥaddād in the eleventh century Hijrī, into "Habīb," which is one of the attributes of their ancestor, the Prophet ﷺ, the literal meaning of which is "beloved."

The author, Habīb Aḥmad Mashhūr son of Ṭāhā al-Ḥaddād, was one of the most powerful ʿAlawī influences in East Africa and is generally considered to have been the "Renewer" of Islam in those parts.

He was born in Qaydun where he naturally followed in the footsteps of his ancestors, committing the Quran to memory at an early age and spending most of his time in the relentless pursuit of the various branches of religious knowledge. In the short preface to this work when first printed in 1990 we gave his date of birth as 1329 AH. Further inquiry revealed that, although never formally recorded, it was much more likely to have been 1325 /1907 CE. His father, *sayyid* Ṭāhā, was a *walī* whose true state remained hidden to most of his contemporaries and who spent long years in Indonesia. Thus it was that Habīb Aḥmad was raised by his mother, the saintly *Safiyya*, daughter of the great Imām Ṭāhir ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥaddād, from whom she received her instruction in the Quran and religious sciences, forming a most effective link between him and her son. Then Habīb Aḥmad's education was taken over by another two great masters of the house of Ḥaddād, Ḥabīb ʿAbdallāh and Habīb ʿAlawī, the two brothers who founded the *Ribāt* of Qaydūn, the school of religious sciences where Ḥabīb Aḥmad was soon to become, at an early age, a teacher.

Knowledge in Islam must be supported by unbroken chains of

transmission to the Prophet ﷺ. Those who receive one or more sciences or part thereof from a master and are considered by him worthy, receive the *ijaza,* the authorization to transmit it, in their turn, to others. Habīb Ahmad, as has always been the 'Alawī custom, sought to receive the *ijaza* from as numerous masters as was possible. He learned from dozens of shaykhs in Ḥadramawt, the Hijaz, Indonesia, and East Africa.

In the early 1350's AH, he settled in Mombasa, the major seaport of Kenya and from there took innumerable trips to the villages in the Kenyan bush, calling the tribes to Islam. His fame spread across all of East Africa, and he was soon to become known simply as "Habīb." In 1375 AH, he moved to Kampala in Uganda where he was to stay for 13 years.

Habib Aḥmad's work in Kenya and Uganda led to a massive increase in the number of Muslims. He was a tireless teacher and all those who wanted knowledge, *baraka,* advice, or comfort flocked to his house. Arabs, Indians, and Africans in their thousands came to him and benefited from his knowledge, the light radiating from his presence, and the power of his *du'a'*.

This book was written during his sojourn in Kampala. In its first chapters he discourses on *Tawḥīd,* calling non-Muslims to the worship of the One. The middle chapters are aimed at the generality of Muslims; they deal with many contemporary problems, all of which are still relevant to this day. The last chapters include the spiritual dimension for those who yearn in their heart of hearts for the higher realities known to the gnostics. The book thus spans the three dimensions *of Islām, Īmān,* and *Iḥsān* or *sharī'a, ṭarīqa,* and *ḥaqīqa,* being a master demonstration of how the ultimate source of every Islamic science is none other than the "Key to the Garden," the affirmation that there is no other god than the One and that Muhammad is His Messenger.

Habīb Ahmad was a widely traveled man whose vision of

things was profound and all-encompassing. He disliked too much preoccupation with worldly affairs, yet was keenly interested in whatever affected the Muslims at large and always capable of summing up international events, political or otherwise, in a few words, pointing out the Divine wisdom underlying them.

He was a living exemplar of how the Prophet's *Sunna* is to be lived. Every movement, every word, every smile immediately evoked the radiant presence of the Prophet ﷺ. None looked at him without remembering God. His awesome dignity imposed courtesy on his visitors and excluded frivolity, yet his gentle, gracious manners and equal respect for everyone soothed their hearts and made them forget their troubles and experience the serenity and joy of being accepted by one so close to God and His Messenger.

Ḥabīb Aḥmad died in Jeddah on the afternoon of Wednesday the 6th of December 1995 CE (14th of Rajab 1416 AH) after an illness that lasted about two months. His Funeral Prayer was performed twice, once in Jeddah, led by *sayyid* Muḥammad ʿAlawī al-Mālikī, in the presence of Ḥabīb ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Saqqāf, Ḥabīb Aḥmad's lifelong friend, then again in the Sacred Precinct in Makka, before the Kaʿba. He was buried in the Maʿlā cemetery of Makka, in the enclosure reserved for the ʿAlawīs, to the left of the cemetery's entrance.

May God reward him for all that he has done for the cause of Islam, grant him the most exalted station in paradise and grant us to be reunited with him in the life-to-come.

Mostafa al-Badawi
4 Safar, 1418 AH
(9 June, 1997 CE)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE
Revised Edition

It is now forty years since this book was written, twenty since it was translated into English, and twelve since the translation was first published. The issues that had caused the author so much concern at the time have become, without exception, all the more pressing today. The need to convey the Islamic concept of *Tawḥid* to the world at large in clear unequivocal terms has been and shall remain the Muslim's first duty. Now that there is renewed worldwide attention toward Islam, it has become even more urgent to convey its core concept, without which there is no religion: the Oneness of God.

The Muslim community is now sinking into overt disarray. Fanatical adherence to a particular "school" while accusing everyone else of corrupted creed, heresy, or outright disbelief has become a rampant illness whose etiology includes sectarianism and a shameless lack of intellectual rigor and honesty. Ignorant people issue legal judgments unabashedly. Heads of states bicker while people suffer under the iron hand of abuse, oppression, and terrible occupation. They find it so hazardous to their personal interests to work together that they prefer dubious alliances at the expense of religion, morality, and honor. On the other hand, would-be Sufis spend their time criticizing each other over irrelevancies, unconscious

of what is really at stake. Meanwhile, Satan helps himself in the world nearly unopposed, most conspicuously availing himself of the media that imposes on the eyes and ears of men and women messages that no longer need to be subtle and that erode human sensitivity toward spirituality, the love of God, and His worship. Muslims are under enormous pressure to abandon the morality of their ancestors and adopt the dissolute pattern of modern chaos that glorifies the world and lures throngs into loving it above all else; the next logical step is to abandon religion altogether, turning it into a vestigial organ no longer relevant or needed. The seductions, temptations, and illusions of their times are like a tempestuous ocean that threatens to engulf every Muslim not firmly established in his faith and in his attachment to God, His Messenger, His Book, and the few remaining genuine scholars of this community.

We now know with renewed clarity why the Prophet ﷺ struck an analogy with Noah's Ark: "The likeness of the People of my House among us is that of Noah's Ark. Those who board it are saved, while those who fail to do so drown."[4] The Quran describes the Ark as sailing amidst waves like mountains (11:42). The dangers of our times are indeed like these waves. Only those who attach themselves to the saintly and scholarly progeny of the Prophet ﷺ will survive, for they will have boarded a divinely protected vessel. For this reason and others that will be shortly elucidated, the wisdom of Ḥabīb Aḥmad Mashhūr al-Ḥaddād is of immediate relevance today, perhaps more so than when his book was first composed.

In this edition, we have thoroughly revised the text with an eye to greater clarity and accuracy regarding the translation. Also we added references for all the hadiths cited.

Mostafa al-Badawi
7 Shaʿbān 1423
13 October 2002

FOREWORD

In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful! Praise is for God. May blessings and peace be invoked upon the Messenger of God, and upon his most noble Family and righteous Companions, and all those who follow them.

The book which follows, *Key to the Garden,* by the great scholar and summoner to God, al-Ḥabīb al-Sayyid Aḥmad Mashhūr al-Ḥaddād, is addressed to all his Muslim brethren, in the hope that God will open thereby the gates of the Garden of Joy for those who receive it with a sound heart, and make an effort to call others to Him in the upright way which He has laid down.

In this little book, my good friend, the noble *sayyid*, addresses himself to a number of important issues pertaining to the Testimony of Faith, which leads to salvation and happiness in this life and the next, and which, as one of the most important topics of theology, must be known thoroughly by all who desire sincerely to summon mankind to the Truth and the way of the Believers. He also provides a number of opinions, discussions, and words of warning and guidance, which represent the fruit of his extensive knowledge, studies, and experience, all expressed in his powerful literary style. May God bring great benefit through this book and reward him for his services to Islam and the Muslims, with eternal happiness

in His Gardens, in the company of the Prophets, the True Saints (*Siddīqūn*), the Martyrs and the Righteous. For assuredly, God is with those who do good.

Ḥasanayn Muḥammad Makhlūf
Late Grand Muftī of Egypt
Member of the Senior Scholars Council
13 Rabīʿ al-Thānī, 1389 AH

AUTHOR'S PROLOGUE

In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise belongs to God, Lord of the Worlds, Guide of the bewildered, and Joiner of those who are severed, whose help we seek in worldly matters and in religion. May He send His blessings and peace upon our master Muḥammad, the Truthful and Trustworthy, and upon his Family, Companions, and all those who excel in following them until the Day of Reckoning.

To proceed: This is a short treatise on the sciences included in the "Phrase of Unification [*Tawḥīd*] and Testimony [*Shahāda*]," and the kinds of behavior and activities it indicates. I present it to those of my readers who thirst for an understanding of the truths of religion, in the hope that their hearts will accept it with approval and satisfaction and that it will renew their yearning for this honey-laced fountain.

I have called it *Key to the Garden*, hoping that it will unlock the doors of the Garden of Contentment [*Riḍwān*] and Immortality for those who set their faith in its contents and act accordingly: *This is the Garden which you have inherited for what you used to do* (QURAN, 7:43). Within the limits of my shortcomings and inadequacies, I have included in it the meanings and fruits of *Tawḥīd*, which must be known, and the kinds of knowledge,

sciences, indications, and acts implied by the Testimony for those who are legally responsible [*mukallaf*].[5] At times certain necessary digressions have been made into questions of importance in an effort to clarify and shed light on them.

If I have hit the mark, then it is solely through the favor of God the Generous. And if I have erred, I hope I shall not be deprived of the reward for making the attempt. "Actions are valued according to their intentions, and every man is dealt with in accordance with what he has intended."[6]

We ask God to help us, and to accept our endeavor.

CHAPTER 1

The Phrase of Tawhid *and Its Meaning*

Lā ilāha illa'llāh: A phrase sublime in its meaning, brief in its construction, vast in its effect, noble in its rank, brilliant in its light, and unique in its merit. It comprises four words upon which the Faith is founded and the *qibla* set. This is the phrase that was given in every Book sent down by God to every one of His noble Messengers, and through which one is rescued from the infernal fires and wins eternal happiness in the Gardens. God the Exalted has said: *Know that there is no god but God!* (QURAN, 47:19); *I am God, there is no god but Me, so worship Me!* (QURAN, 20:14); *God, there is no god but He, the Living,*[7] *the Sustainer*[8] (QURAN, 2:255); *God, there is no god but He, to Him belong the Most Beautiful Names* (QURAN, 20:8); and *We sent no Messenger before you without revealing to him: "There is no God but Me, so worship Me"* (QURAN, 21:25).

Through sound belief and certainty in its meaning, and by submission to it, one attains to faith or *īmān*. By uttering it with sincerity, and truly acting in accordance with it, *islām* results. By joining sound belief with submission to its authority there dawns in the heart the reality of excellence or *iḥsān*.

The Phrase of *Tawhid* is also called the "Phrase of the Testimony," and of "Sincerity," "Reality," "Truth," "the Pledge," "Faith," "Piety," the "Good Word," the "Abiding Word," "God's Most Exalted Word," the "Word of Intercession," the "Price of the Garden," and the "Key to the Garden."

It is that with which a man first enters Islam, and the last thing he leaves the world with—to the Garden and eternal bliss. As the hadith says: "Whoever has for his last words in this life *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* shall enter the Garden."[9] It is the first obligation, and also the last. Whoever says it with certainty and dies while holding fast to it shall have the joy of entering the Garden, as this hadith states. But whoever rejects it with arrogance, either by denial or by ascribing associates to God, shall enter the Fire, and there is no worse abode.

Those who arrogantly refrain from worshipping Me shall enter Hell subjugated (QURAN, 40:60); *As for those who were scornful and arrogant, He will give them a painful torment, and they shall find no protecting friend or helper against God* (QURAN, 4:173); *God has forbidden the Garden to the one who ascribes partners to God, and his abode is the Fire* (QURAN, 5:72).

Lā ilāha illa'llāh means that God alone is worthy of worship. *Allāh*[10] is the noun which denotes the Holiest Essence,[11] the Necessary Existent,[12] who is possessed of all the attributes of perfection and majesty, is beyond contingency, beyond having associates or peers, beyond resembling anything, and beyond any attribute or state which does not befit His Glory and Magnitude. For He is the Unique Divinity, the One, the Self-Sufficient, who neither begets nor is begotten,[13] who has no likeness. There is no god but Him, Transcendent is He. Nothing shares in His Essence, Attributes, or Actions; to Him belong Sovereignty and all praise, and He has power over all things.

CHAPTER 2

The Science that Investigates Its Meaning and Proofs

The meaning of this noble phrase embraces all that we have set out in sum, and what the leaders among the people of the science of *Tawhīd* have expounded in detail in their writings. It has been elucidated and conclusively proved in the verses of the Quran and the hadiths of the Noble Prophet ﷺ. From these two sources the theologians have derived the categories of Divinity, Prophecy, and doctrines received in faith [*sam'iyyāt*].[14] They have elaborated on these matters with an abundance that is a cure for and an illumination of hearts, and have called it the "Science of *Tawhīd*," the "Science of Beliefs," and the "Science of the Principles of Religion" [*Uṣūl al-Dīn*]. This science is preeminent over all other sciences and comprises that which is essential. By its light believers are guided, and from its pure wellspring the gnostics[15] quench their thirst. This science, together with the sciences of Quranic commentary [*tafsīr*], Prophetic tradition [*hadīth*], law [*fiqh*], jurisprudence [*usūl al-fiqh*], and Sufism [*Taṣawwuf*], are among the Islamic sciences which no seeker of knowledge and gnosis can do without. Whoever knows what is obligatory for him of these will be clear about his case, possessed of insight into his religion, and shall be among the

successful. Beyond doubt, the foundation of all this is knowledge of the One, the Unique—Majestic is He—together with certainty regarding His Oneness and His other exalted attributes and beautiful names, and His complete freedom from all that does not befit His majesty. This knowledge is the utmost aim and the purest fountain, and is described as "the firm implantation of faith in the heart."

Now, faith is a light that God casts into the heart of His servant to make its glass luminous so that it may perceive the hidden knowledge and secrets as though it were actually beholding and witnessing them. This results in utter concentration on God, sincerity, tranquility in His Remembrance, fear and hope in Him, acquiring noble qualities of character, divesting oneself of reprehensible ones, addressing oneself to acts of obedience, abstaining from sinful and wrong actions, and winning His nearness and good pleasure—Exalted is He—which is the greatest felicity of all.

CHAPTER 3

God Alone Is the True Deity

God alone, and none other, is the true Deity, the Necessary Existent, who is Creator,[16] Producer,[17] Fashioner,[18] Provider, Giver of life and death, and Wise Disposer;[19] who has perfected everything He has created, and excelled in everything which He has made; who directs all things with ultimate precision, and has determined everything He has decreed. He alone is the true God, Pre-existent and Eternal,[20] worthy of inward and external worship, exalted above all blemish, who possesses the most exalted attributes and the most beautiful names. His are might and majesty; none shares in His essence, attributes or actions. There is no other God than He.

Indeed, God is but One God (QURAN, 4:171). *Exalted is God, the True King, there is no god but He!* (QURAN, 23:116). *Is there any creator apart from God, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? There is no god but He* (QURAN, 35:3). *He directs the ordinance from heaven to the earth* (QURAN, 32:5). *He gives life and He gives death, and to Him you shall return* (QURAN, 10:56). *Originator*[21] *of the heavens and the earth; when He decrees something He only says "Be!" and it is* (QURAN, 6:101).

CHAPTER 4

All Beings Are in Need of God

All beings proclaim their powerlessness and abject need of God (the Exalted, Mighty, and Omnipotent) for their existence, survival, and everything concerning them. With the tongue of their states of existence, they testify that He is the true God, the Lord of the Worlds, and that He has no associates in Divinity, Lordship, attributes, actions, in creating and actualizing, or in the management or the precise accomplishment of affairs. Rather, God alone is the Creator, the Protector, the Supreme, the Powerful, the Disposer, the Actor,[22] the Wise Chooser. Majestic is His ability, formidable are His gifts, and exalted is His wisdom. This is proved by the fact that His creation rests on precise rules and perfectly measured laws, which He originated, by the hand of His Ability, in a most complete state and an order most perfect. His magnificent artifacts, His dazzling creatures, His flourishing inventions, with which He has filled His earth and heavens, all speak of His Ability, Oneness, Greatness, Majesty, and pre-existent Knowledge, and testify to His wise disposition of affairs. He has spoken well who once said:

O wonder! How can He be disobeyed

or by the thankless be denied?
For God, in each and every movement
and in every stillness, made traces that us guide.
In everything a sign has ever been laid
by which His Oneness stands testified.

The "sign" that testifies to His Oneness is the state of utter dependency in which all things exist. Their existence and survival depend on the One who has made them in the way they are and gave each of them its essential nature, so that they are determined in the finest way and not fragmented by a multiplicity of volitions. *Had there been in the heavens and the earth other deities besides God, then both would have been ruined. Transcendent is God, Lord of the Throne, beyond what they ascribe* (QURAN, 21:22). *God has taken no son, neither is there any god beside Him, or else each god would support that which he created, and some of them would have gained ascendancy over others. Transcendent is God above what they ascribe!* (QURAN, 23:91). *Had there been other gods with Him, as they say, they would have sought a way against the Lord of the Throne* (QURAN, 17:42).

CHAPTER 5

The Ignorance and Misguidedness of the Idolaters

Never has any of God's creatures claimed divinity and lordship in the way that the two accursed fools Nimrod and Pharaoh did, or claimed it for any existent thing, such as stars, stones, animals, and the like, without signs of imperfection, powerlessness, neediness, createdness, and subjugation appearing both in the human claimant and the object about which the claim was made. Only an ignorant man or an arrogant fool would deny this.

How enormous, therefore, is the lie invented by the idolaters![23] How weak are their minds! How ignorant are they of the great glory of their Lord, who did create them and fashion them well, that they ascribe partners unto Him in divinity, lordship, sovereignty, and greatness, and in His disposing and managing of the universe, when these "partners" are created slaves, who are powerless, feeble, *incapable of either harm or benefit for themselves, and possess not death nor life, nor power to raise the dead* (QURAN, 25:3); and yet they worship them instead of God! *They invoke only females instead of God; they invoke only a rebellious demon* (QURAN, 4: 117) (may God curse him!).[24] *You worship only idols instead of God; you create a lie. Those you worship instead of God own no*

provision for you; therefore seek your provision from God. Worship and thank Him; and unto Him you shall be returned (QURAN, 9: 17). *What you worship instead of Him are but names given by you and your fathers, for which no authority has been revealed by God* (QURAN, 53:23). *When you pray to them they do not hear your prayer, and if they could hear they would not answer you. On the Day of Arising they will disown your idolatry* (QURAN, 35:14). *Do they hear you when you call them? Do they benefit or harm you?* (QURAN, 26:73).

How could such a thing be, when all beings—animals, plants, inanimate objects, heaven and earth and all they contain—can be seen by the deniers themselves, with their own eyes, to be powerless and subjugated in their own affairs, let alone the affairs of others? They have power over nothing, and yet these people still worship them! They are blind and deaf to truth; they follow their own whims and go astray. *It is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts which are within their breasts* (QURAN, 22:46).

God has exposed the misguidance of the idolaters in their idol-worship by striking a profound analogy, which He commands them to reflect on: *O Mankind! An analogy is coined, so listen to it! Those upon whom you call besides God shall never create a fly, even should they all unite for that purpose. And if the fly robbed them of anything they would be unable to retrieve it; weak are both the seeker and the sought. They have failed to esteem God as He rightfully should be. God is indeed Strong and August* (QURAN, 22:73-74). Now, a fly is a creature which despite its minute size and frailty still has a head, eyes, wings, limbs, and faculties that are all quite precise and accurate. Flies breed and go through their phases of development, and then roam in every direction through the air, and feed on whatever they can scavenge. They are proof of the excellence of God's creativeness and of His astounding ability. Seeing that the idolaters worshipped idols instead of God,

He exposed their fallacy, the corruption of their minds, and their excessive ignorance by the analogy He gave. He declared: these idols you worship are so powerless and weak that they are incapable of creating feeble insignificant flies, even if they were to unite and help each other. When this is undeniable, how can you then worship them, since worship is a thing due only to a God who is powerful to create and bring things into existence? The utter powerlessness of the idols is further exposed by the fact that if these same weak, insignificant flies were to snatch some of the honey and perfume that the ignorant worshippers used to anoint their idols with, they would be incapable of retrieving it. When they are so blatantly incapable of recovering what is theirs from the weakest of God's creatures, how can you associate them with God and worship them? *Weak are both the seeker* (the idols which seek to recover what had been taken away from them) *and the sought* (the flies themselves). *They have failed to esteem God as He rightfully should be* (the idolaters have no true knowledge of God, have not magnified Him as He deserves, nor have they described Him as befits Him, while they associate idols with Him, which are so utterly powerless that they are incapable of exacting their due from the weakest and most despicable of creatures). *God is indeed Strong and August* (He is Powerful and the Vanquisher; He alone, without associates, is worthy of adoration; how can you then make the powerless and vanquished similar to Him—to be worshipped like Him?).

God—August and Majestic—has said in a hadith *qudsi*, "Who is more unjust than those who attempt to emulate My creation? Let them create an atom, or a fly, or a seed!"[26]

CHAPTER 6

Existent Beings Are Proofs of the Divine Ability

Sound knowledge and conclusive proofs have established that everything in the universe, whether it be high or low, articulate or mute, is interconnected. The universe is constructed of harmoniously interrelated and interacting forces. If a single atom should deviate a hair's breadth from its designated course, for which it was created, the order of the world would be upset, its precise interconnectedness disrupted, and the heavens would collapse upon the earth. The worlds have been and shall remain joined and bound in mutual attraction, performing the functions they were created for, in the most perfect, ordered, and precise way—until the appointed time.

Who then is the creator of all this? Who has originated these tremendous forces? Who moves the planets in the heavens, maintains their orbits and their regularity, and has governed them since the beginning of the world? Who holds the heavens back from collapsing upon the earth? Who moves ships in the seas, clouds in the air, and arranges the affairs of all beings upon the earth? Who sustains all that is in the heavens and earth, whether planets, shining stars, nations of different races, languages, and traits, and all other excellently fashioned and precisely disposed things, which

have performed their functions down the ages with such exactitude? Is it not God, Lord of the Worlds, the Omniscient, the Able, the Disposer, the Wise, to whom belongs all Sovereignty, who has neither partner nor helper?

Have you not seen that God has made all that is in the earth subservient to you? And that the ship runs on the sea by His command, and that He holds back heaven from collapsing upon the earth, save by His leave? (QURAN, 22:65). *Indeed, God holds the heavens and the earth from deviating, and if they were to deviate no one would hold them after Him: He is Forbearing and Forgiving* (QURAN, 35:41). *It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does night outstrip day. Each floats in an orbit* (QURAN, 36:40). *His Pedestal encompasses the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary in preserving them. He is the Most High, the Formidable* (QURAN, 2:255). There is no god but Him; Transcendent is He!

Similarly, God the Exalted has set in both humans and animals the secret of life and ontogeny, which He is uniquely able to do. Should the most skillful painters and artisans attempt to imitate any of these things, they would be able to do so only with regard to the form, and would be incapable of instilling life and the ability to grow and move, for no creature can do this; rather this is the exclusive province of God, Transcendent is He: *They question you about the Spirit. Say: the Spirit is of the command of my Lord. And you have not been given any knowledge except little* (QURAN, 17: 85). Such is the case with all the attributes and benefits with which God has endowed His creatures, according to His Knowledge and Will. No creature will ever have the power to originate one such attribute that God has not willed: *Have you seen the fire that you light? Was it you who created the tree for it, or were We the grower? We have made it a reminder and a benefit for the dwellers in the wilderness* (QURAN, 56:71-73). Do those partners that the idolaters recognize and worship have any power over any such

things? Indeed not! Rather, such power lies in God, the August, the Wise; besides whom there is no lord, and besides whom there is none worthy of worship.

CHAPTER 7

Existent Beings Extol God (Exalted Is He!)

Everything in existence affirms—in accordance with the tongue of its particular nature[27]—[God's] Power (Exalted is He), His Oneness, Wisdom, and His disposal of all the affairs of His creatures, and their dependence on Him for their existence, their particular nature, and their subsistence. They praise and thank Him for the outpouring of His favors, grace, munificence, and generosity: ***The seven heavens and the earth and all that they contain extol Him. There is nothing that does not extol His praise, but you understand not their extolling*** (QURAN, 17:44). The incomprehension here is because the extolling is made not with a physical organ, but is declared by the actual state of the creature, which is more eloquent and truthful, and can be subject to neither ostentation nor lies; nor does it engender misinterpretation. Some authorities have stated that it is explicitly articulated by the very things concerned. God has enabled some of His chosen servants, such as David, Solomon and Muḥammad—peace and blessings be upon them—to comprehend the extolling of certain animals and inanimate things. The Messenger of God ﷺ once said, "When Gabriel, peace be upon him, came to me with the Message, there was no stone or tree that I passed by that did not

say, 'Peace be upon you, O Messenger of God!'"[28] Ibn Mas'ūd (God be pleased with him) said, "We used to eat with the Messenger of God and would hear the food extolling God."[29] And Anas (God be pleased with him) said, "The Prophet ﷺ once picked up a handful of pebbles, which I could hear extolling God. He then put them in the hand of Abū Bakr and they continued. He then put them in our hands, whereupon they stopped."[30]

God the Exalted has said regarding David ﷺ, *We subjected the mountains to extol with him at evening and at sunrise* (QURAN, 38:18); and *We gave David of Our favor; O mountains, repeat after him!* (QURAN, 34:10), that is, *extol with him*, for when he went out into the mountains and extolled the praises of God, the mountains answered by repeating what he said. The ants' speech to Solomon ﷺ is clearly stated in the Quran, in a manner which leaves no room for doubt or interpretation.[31] *Blessed, then, is God, the best of creators* (QURAN, 23:14). Too exalted is He for thoughts and conjectures to attain, for He is the Sublime King. Neither may He be encompassed by dimensions, for they are His creation. He is free of the attributes of contingent beings, which are subject to change and extinction. He is exalted beyond having a partner in His Essence, attributes, or acts, for He alone is unique in all these things. *Transcendent and Exalted is He, above what they ascribe!* (QURAN, 6:100).

CHAPTER 8

Rights of the Phrase of Tawhīd *Over Mankind*

Know, my brother, that all the religious and accessory sciences[32] are founded upon the elucidation of this honored phrase [of *Tawhīd*] and the exposition and clarification of the rights it exercises over humankind, and of the acts of worship and human transactions governed by it, whether these take the form of beliefs, statements, or actions.

Its meaning has already been explained. Regarding its rights over humanity, you should be aware that these comprise firm belief in its meaning, truthful affirmation of it, and total submission to the Divine by holding constantly to acts of worship and obedience, and submission to all commandments and prohibitions. Thus the fulfillment of its rights involves the heart, the tongue, and the limbs. As a whole it constitutes a pledge between the servant and his Lord whereby the former undertakes to fulfill rights [of *Tawhīd*] and to carry out all its obligations for as long as he abides in this world—in the hope that should he fulfill these correctly he may attain salvation and triumph in the Afterlife. Wahb ibn Munabbih was once asked, "Is not *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* the key to the Garden?" "Yes indeed," he replied. "However, every key must have teeth to be able to open the

door. Among these teeth are a tongue free of lying and backbiting; a humble heart free of envy, treachery, and forbidden and dubious things; and limbs engaged in service and pure from sins."

Whoever keeps his pledge that he has made with God, He shall grant him a great reward (QURAN, 48:10). Thus the one who believes it in his heart, affirms it with his tongue, and acts in accordance with it with his members shall attain felicity in this life and in the next and is a real believer and a true Muslim. The one who does not believe it in his heart is a disbeliever and will be in the Fire perpetually.

A person who affirms it with his tongue but does not believe it in his heart is a hypocrite; he also will abide in the Fire perpetually.

The one who believes it in his heart and affirms it with his tongue but does not act in accordance with it is a sinful believer, who will be chastised for his rebelliousness according to God's will, but will not remain in the Fire perpetually.

Among the fruits of belief in the heart and affirmation with the tongue of this noble phrase is that even if a servant lives out his life denying the Oneness of the Lord (Exalted is He) and His Magnitude, Majesty, and Ability, and worships and submits to idols instead, but then utters and affirms [the phrase] with faith, his life and possessions become inviolable and he sloughs off his sins and transgressions so that he becomes as pure as the day his mother gave him birth. For "Islam annuls what preceded it," and repentance erases sins. It is stated in a hadith, "I have been commanded to fight people until they say *Lā ilāha illa'Allāh.*[A] When they do so, their lives and possessions are inviolate to me, except in accordance with

[A] This applies to people who are already at war with Muslims. Should they suddenly decide to accept Islam, they are no longer considered foes, and it becomes legally forbidden to fight them. This hadith does not mean that Muslims should combat non-Muslims with whom they are at peace, nor does it mean that people should be compelled to accept Islam, for Islamic law explicitly forbids coercing people into accepting the faith. — *Translator*

the rights of Islam; and their judgment is in the hands of God."[33] The "rights of Islam" are the retaliatory and statutory punishments[34] that God has laid down, so that the Phrase of Testimony will not exempt from punishment someone who, having said it and pledged to abide by its obligations, subsequently commits murder, adultery, theft, or some other harmful act, thereby deserving to be executed, have his hand amputated, or be subject to one of the discretionary punishments [*taʿzīr*]. Such are the "rights of Islam." And [the Prophet] ﷺ said that "their judgment is in the hands of God," because affirmation is an external thing, whereas belief and submission are hidden, known only to *the One who knows the betrayer of the eyes, and what hearts conceal* (QURAN, 40:19). We have not been commanded to search for what resides in the heart, but only to act according to what is apparent; this being a mercy granted by the Lord of the Worlds.

CHAPTER 9

Islam Is Conditional on Believing in Both Testimonies

None of the rulings founded upon the "Good Word" in this life and the next can be obtained unless one joins it with the affirmation of Prophecy and Messengership which are vested in the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers, who is our master Muhammad ﷺ. Whoever affirms God's unity but denies the Messengership of Muhammad ﷺ is not one of the people of *Tawḥīd*, but is as much a denier of God as the one who rejects *Tawḥīd*, since he denies what God has proclaimed about His Messenger and rejects His command that we testify to and affirm the Message, and obey, follow, and take the path of the Messenger; and thus one also denies His warnings not to contravene his commands. God has said (Exalted is He!), *Muhammad is the Messenger of God* (QURAN, 48:29); *Thus have We made you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness against you* (QURAN, 2:143); *We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, and as a caller to God by His leave, and a lamp which gives light* (QURAN, 33:45-6); *Obey God and obey the Messenger* (QURAN, 4:59); *Say [O Muhammad], "If you love God then follow me"* (QURAN, 3:31); and *Let those who contravene his*

commands beware lest hardship befall them or a painful torment (QURAN, 24:63). And there are many more verses on the subject.

Affirming Muḥammad's Messengership ﷺ is incomplete until one is certain that his mission embraces the whole of creation, Arabs and non-Arabs, and human beings and jinn. God has said (Exalted is He!): *We have not sent you [O Muḥammad] except as a mercy to the worlds* (QURAN, 21:107); *We have sent you to all people, as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner* (QURAN, 34:28); and *Say, "O people! I am God's Messenger* to *you all"* (QURAN, 7:158).

In this way, whoever denies the universality of his message, or says that he is a messenger only to the Arabs, is guilty of disbelief, as is demonstrated by the verses quoted above, which are completely explicit as to the universality of his mission. [The Prophet ﷺ] said, "I am sent to all mankind."[15] As such and to the extent of his capacity, he sent letters to the kings of the world calling them to Islam. The call to Islam spread over every part of the earth and reached all the diverse nations, which came flocking to it with sincere intentions and open hearts.

In this regard some verses from a poem I once composed about his mission come to mind:

You came down to the land men to instruct
like rain that covered all its length and breadth;
A shining sun in morning blaze that left
no night, or star, or lantern to distract.
You left it tolerant, its waymarks shining bright
it dragged its trails across high heaven's dune
Following the revolutions of day and night
with Truth's troops in flowing streams.
Its envoy the Quran which all men guides
unto the strongest way, where good speech bides.

CHAPTER 10

Evidence of God's Existence and Oneness

You have come to know that every creature and every diverse being in existence, whether heavenly or earthly, animal, vegetable or mineral, is evidence of the Divine Ability. It is enough for a man of intellect to reflect about them and about the precision of their craftsmanship for him to behold them as evidence which proves the existence and dazzling ability of God and, accordingly, the need to submit to His Majesty, Glory, Perfection, and Wisdom, and worship Him as is His due. All these evidences are scattered throughout the Book and the *Sunna*, and are written on the pages of existence itself.

It is self-evident that everything that is made must have a maker, and every event a cause.[36] Would reason accept that a house erected itself in the absence of builders and an architect? Or that a ship could exist without there having been a skilled shipbuilder? Or that the heavens hold themselves up, and that the planets move by their own accord? Surely not!

Could any intellect accept that this formidable and meticulous domain of heaven and earth was established in the absence of a powerful and wise Maker? Surely not! It is all by His creation, ability, power, and wisdom—in all of which He has no partner.

A nomad was once asked, "What proof is there of the existence of God (Exalted is He)?" "*Subhan'Allah!*" he replied. "Droppings are evidence of a camel; footprints evidence of a walker; and yet when a sky with constellations and an earth with mountain passes are present, is this not evidence of the existence of a High and Able God?"

Some atheists once questioned Imam Abu Hanīfa (God be pleased with him) what proof he had of the existence of the Creator (August and Majestic is He), and they said he had to convince them or suffer. He told them, "Leave me alone! I must think about a strange event that has been reported to me. I have been told that there is a ship at sea, heavily laden with various kinds of merchandise; and although there is no one on board to steer and guard her, it comes and goes all by herself, ploughing through enormous waves and going where she pleases." They told him, "No intelligent man would say such a thing." He replied, "Wretches! And yet you say that all these existent beings, in the higher and lower worlds, and every intricately precise thing they contain, have no maker?" At this they were dumbfounded, and, returning to truth, they entered Islam at his hands.

There are verses in the Noble Quran which summon us to the necessity of thinking about the marvelous way in which everything in existence has been divinely fashioned, and to derive from this evidence of the Ability of the Maker, His Existence, and His Oneness in His realm. Among them are the following: *Have they not contemplated the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and what things God has created, and that their time may have drawn near? In what discourse after this will they then believe?* (QURAN, 7:185); *We have not created the heavens and the earth and what lies between them in play* (QURAN, 21:16); *Let man consider from what he was created: gushing fluid issuing from between the backbone and the ribs* (QURAN, 86:5-4); *Will they not look at the camels,*

how they were created? The heaven, and how it was made high? The mountains, and how they were set up? The earth, and how it was spread out? So remind them! For you are only a reminder (QURAN, 88:17-21); and *Do they not reflect on the Quran, or are there locks on their hearts?* (QURAN, 47:24).

CHAPTER 11

A Fine Poem by Imam ʿAbdallāh Ibn Jaʿfar Madhar

This is an incomparable poem by the *sayyid*, Imām ʿAbdallāh ibn Jaʿfar Madhar al-ʿAlawī which treats the greatness of God's handiwork and the transcendence of His perfection and majesty, and serves as a reminder of His favors and gifts. We shall quote it in full, for it is like pearls strung together, and its meanings succeed each other in close succession. It encompasses subtleties, knowledge, and harmony, all of which captivate the mind and intoxicate the spirit, without wine, with their intimacy and sanctity. It is fragrant with the perfume of the musk of that seal.[37] The lover cannot be blamed if he is enthusiastic in describing such a poem, or if he yearns to approach the enclosure of its tents, drink of its chalice, and attain to the removal of the veil!

The Ability of an Able Lord appeared,
and shone unveiled, Light upon Light;
Truth blazed out when rendered clear
by One of Might and Mighty Rank.
These are the fires which have blazed to guide
in the dark of night, so march in earnest.

Before these another one sufficed Moses
the best of fires lit from the best of mounts.

It overtook the spirits of men who thirsted
and they were quenched from this sweet water.
They poured the wine of love onto the coal of remoteness
healing thereby live coals with wines;
They remained in these states, for they swayed
between celebrations, fragrance, and joy.
And presence, delight, and contentment,
and mansions, gardens, and flowers.

Stand at His doors, acknowledging, confessing
at the station of the destitute, the abject slave.
Spread your palms up to One of generosity,
of vast favors, Relenting, Forgiving,
Self-Exalted, Eternal, Unique,
Self-Subsistent, Able, Kind, and Thankful,
High, Formidable, Invincible,
Exalted, All-Hearing, All-Seeing,
Forbearant, Generous, Benevolent,
Compassionate, Subtle, All-Aware.
The Powerful in His Power is high above
having a match, or a namesake, or a like.
Exalted is He above morning or evening
wherein He is, or night or early dawn,
Or a place or a time to embrace
of Him an ancient or later modality,
Or beginningness, or endingness,
or a number of months or years,
Or what is reached by eyes or conjecture,
or ages—for He is the Creator of ages,

O stars of the night, who is it that brings you back
from the eastern side after you have set?
Who else but He, the Possessor of Might, who
by His Power said to the planets: Spin!
O crescent moon, curved like a palm branch,
who has taken from you the shine of fullness?
Ask this sun: who has taught her
her course from rising and setting?
She crosses the world in one day,
the very wind tires in keeping pace.

Truly on earth there are signs, like heaven's signs,
clear, indeed most manifest;
Fruits and growing plants,
watercourses, clouds, and seas,
And mountains of cold and frost which,
meeting the sun, thaw with its heat,
And daylight after obscure night,
shadows followed by luminous morning;
And life and death wherein
the small and the great stand as equals.

All this takes place by *Kāf* and *Nūn*,[18]
And tiredness there is not, nor any lassitude.
O You, of hidden grace, O Judge;
O Giver, Healer of broken bones;
O Saver of those who cry for help;
O Refuge of the refugee, Safety of the safety-seeker!
O my refuge! Be my refuge, and protect me from every evil;
O my ally! Be my ally!
Save us from the sorrows of our worldly lives,
the harshness of death, and the Fire ablaze!

And may the blessing of the Highest King rest upon
Aḥmad, the Chosen, and be repeated in each age!

A certain gnostic once said, "A donkey has more knowledge of God than someone who seeks proof of God's oneness." Therefore let not your perception of existent things be that of the suckling child, or the hardened denier, both of whom see them as mere concrete forms. Instead, let it be that of a wise man who understands the signs and sees the Creator in the creation, the Fashioner in the fashioned universe. If you think that their formation and molding was a formidable task, then know that their Creator is more Formidable still, and that He encompasses all things.

A certain poet once expressed this well:

All you grasp with your imagination;
Majesty, ability and exaltation,
Higher is He who originated creation,
Transcendent is He to whom belongs origination!

CHAPTER 12

The Effects of Tawhīd *and of Its Noble Phrase*

Tawhīd, as the greatest of graces, is the one that yields the most benefit in this world and the next. The one blessed therewith by God must know the value of such a gift. He must strive to guard and protect it, and to be constantly thankful and full of joy to have received it, and try hard to strengthen it within himself by being always of good character and righteous actions, both of which are among the branches of *Tawhīd* and the fruits of faith. Similarly, he must avoid their opposites, which are bad character and sins. It is stated in a hadith, "The adulterer is not a believer while he commits his adultery."[39] Transgressions are the precursors of disbelief.

When *Tawhīd* and faith are lost, no deed can be of benefit—not even the deeds of the ancients and the moderns put together. When a person retains his *Tawhīd* and faith, no harm can come to him, even if he sins, for he will not remain in the Fire perpetually, since he who possesses an atom's weight of faith shall emerge from Hell.

The Two Testimonies are powerfully effective in refining the self, creating rectitude of character, and reinforcing social ties. The Testimony of *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* liberates the mind from illusions, and purifies souls from the filth of idolatry so that they rise up from

the mire of their devotion to other than God (Exalted is He!) and from the debasement which inheres in worshipping idols, animals, and men. Hearts are united by it in the adoration of the one God, and faces are united in orienting themselves to the same *qibla*. *Tawḥīd* has a beneficial effect in uniting the hearts of the human race and making them work together for the common good and for the success of all. The Testimony of *Muḥammadun rasūlu'llāh* and belief in his Message and in his Upright Book strengthen morality, reform souls, and set an excellent example to be followed in all situations.

These two utterances are the believer's treasure and capital, the source of his happiness in this life and in the next: for those who behave strictly in accordance with them and draw light from their radiance in that which is necessary concerning *Tawḥīd* and attachment to the Holiest Presence [*al-Janāb al-Aqdas*], exposing themselves to His spiritual gifts [*wāridāt imdādātih*], and setting themselves in the way of the breaths of reunion and the gifts of nearness; and that which is necessary concerning following the Noblest Messenger, the Firmest Handhold [*al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā*], the Excellent Example, in every religious and worldly transaction, for the goodness of one's daily life and one's abode in the Afterlife, of the heart and the body, the individual and the community. Around the pivot of these Two Testimonies revolves the well-being of the human race in both abodes.

Know that this noble phrase has two halves. First, there is a negation, *lā ilāha* ["there is no deity"], and second there is an affirmation, *illa'llāh* ["except God"]. When the negation is enounced, followed by the affirmation, this signifies that a Muslim has acknowledged and established *Tawḥīd* in his heart by means of this noble phrase, which is incompatible with, and negates, the "Greater Idolatry" [*al-shirk al-akbar*] the presence of which invalidates the foundations of faith. *Tawḥīd* is strengthened by

repeating it with the heart and the tongue. The Prophet said ﷺ, "Renew your faith with *La ilaha illa'llah*."[40] It is also incompatible with, and negates, the "Lesser Idolatry," namely ostentation in worship, the desire to gain eminence and power over others, and all other actions one is concerned with regarding others—desiring their praise and respect, and hoping for status in their eyes. The Prophet said ﷺ, "Idolatry in my nation is more imperceptible than the footfalls of ants."[41] This Lesser Idolatry does not invalidate the foundations of faith, upon which one's salvation depends, but renders it defective. *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* destroys both the Greater and Lesser Idolatry in whoever utters it with sincere faith and acts accordingly. The fact that *Lā ilāha* comes first means that the heart is cleared of these concealed things and these impurities. The subsequent affirmation of *illa'llāh* adorns and fills up the heart with the lights of *Tawhīd* and faith.[42] It is therefore not surprising that holding fast to, and repeating, this invocation brings about the purification of the heart, its cleansing from blemishes, and its illumination. Good deeds are reckoned in accordance with the number of repetitions of the invocation, each *La ilaha illa'llah* being counted as one, while their reward is tenfold or multiplied many more times. If the person engaged in the Remembrance of God bears in mind that *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* is also a verse of the Quran and makes the intention to recite from the Quran together with making invocation, he gains the reward for Quranic recitation also.

A subtle indication [*ishāra*] lies in the fact that the letters of the Testimony all arise from the depths of the body, and none of them are formed by the lips, which points to the fact that these should proceed from the purest inward part, which is the heart, and not from the lips. Also, none of the letters have dots, and this is an allusion to freedom from worshipping anything besides God.

Lā ilāha illa'llāh Muhammadun rasulu'llāh consists of seven words. A man has seven members, and the Fire has seven doors,

and each of the seven words closes one of the seven doors against one of the seven members.

CHAPTER 13

An Important Statement

You have come to know that only the One God is worthy of worship. Therefore, worship should never be addressed to other than He. Worship means utter surrender and humility before the majesty and glory of God, the performance—in service and submission to Him—of the acts required by the *Sharī'a*, praying to Him and seeking His help in difficult times through supplication and imploration, having fear and hope regarding Him, together with longing and awe, love and sincerity, adoration and taking refuge in Him, and relying and depending on Him, in addition to everything else that is due to Him in His Lordship and Majesty. These lofty meanings and religious feelings and emotions are to be offered by the believer's soul with submission and humility only to his Lord and Creator, in servitude [*'ubūdiyya*], worship [*'ibāda*], and slavehood [*'ubūda*].[41]

You should know that worshipping and seeking His help (Exalted is He!) does not mean that one should not make use of visible or invisible means, within the limits of what God has permitted. Examples of these are the taking of medicines, curing illnesses with the verses and Names of God and asking—without servility—for a person's help in fulfilling any legitimate need; for example, when

one asks another Muslim to pray for him, or when one petitions God through him in accordance with his ability and limitations, which the latter can do by turning to God and imploring Him to grant the one who is asking his needs in this life and the next. This He has promised to do in the hadith *qudsī* in which God says, "Those who wish to draw near to Me can do so through nothing better than that which I have made obligatory upon them. A man will then continue to approach Me with supererogatory devotions until I love him. And when I love him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his foot on which he walks, and his hand with which he strikes. If he makes a request of Me I shall certainly grant it, and if he seeks My protection, I shall certainly protect him."[44] The person who is doing the *tawassul* should not ask whoever is praying for him to bring something into existence, for such is the prerogative of God the Exalted, and not within the ability and state of His servants.

Similarly, to *lower the wing of humility and compassion* (QURAN, 17:24) to one's parents, to be modest and gentle with other Muslims, and to respect and be courteous to people of knowledge, uprightness, and nobility does not taint a Muslim's *Tawḥīd,* as long as he has the certainty that these are all nothing but means, which can bring about no consequences or effects save by the leave and assistance of God the Exalted, and on condition that all effects and consequences are attributed to God the Exalted and not to any of His creatures, except, perhaps, metaphorically. This cannot be called worship; it is no more than the employment of means, the exchange of benefits, and mutual assistance in benevolence and in piety. It is to be taken for granted that mutual cooperation means people helping each other, always within the limitations which inhere in the capacity of man; it is no more than the use of an intermediary and metaphorical causality. Our Lord says, *Assist each other in benevolence and piety* (QURAN, 5:2). And in a hadith

it is said, "God will help His servant for as long as His servant helps his brother."[45]

These are the doctrines of the People of the *Sunna* and *Jamā'a* and of the vast majority of the Nation of Muhammad ﷺ, the members of which have behaved according to them since the first three generations[46] and until the present day. These beliefs are set forth in their writings, which are abundant and plentiful in both east and west, and you may refer to them if you wish. Some people may find it hard to discern the reasons behind the prohibitions and permissions which pertain to the acts of those who are legally responsible. They may thus decide, for instance, that it is forbidden to bow one's head when kissing one's father's hand or the hand of a righteous man of knowledge, and say that this is a salute and a form of veneration of which only God is worthy. Perhaps they say this also because of the literal meaning of the hadith in which [one asked], "When one of us meets his brother, should he bow to him?" And the Prophet ﷺ said, "No." "Should he embrace him entirely?" And the Prophet ﷺ said, "No." "Should he take his hand?" And he said, "Yes."[47] But if one subjects such matters to necessary scrutiny, one will see that not every bow is done with the intention of magnification but may simply be a means to some other end. A bow made in order to kiss a hand does not bear the implication that would render it forbidden. Scholars have explained that what is forbidden by this hadith is an action done and intended as a greeting and a magnification, as with the greetings in vogue among certain other nations.

CHAPTER 14

An Actual Incident

I recall an incident which took place once when I was with a group of people in a mosque, having just finished the ritual Prayer, while some of those present were shaking hands with each other and kissing the hand of someone they felt was worthy of it. Someone saw us and addressed me sharply with the words, "Why do you do this? This is idolatry!" I replied:

> My brother! You are very hasty in accusing your brothers of idolatry who perform the ritual Prayer. Should everyone who bows his head for any reason be accused of idolatry? You yourself will shortly go out of the mosque and lower your head in order to put your sandals on; then you will go home and bow your head to eat the food on your plate; then when showing kindness to your children you will bow your head to kiss them, and so on; would you consider each of these acts to be idolatry? You would have ascribed many kinds of idolatry to yourself! As for ourselves, we have not left Islam; we worship God, who is alone and without partner; we do not condemn as a disbeliever anyone who faces our *qibla*; we give the benefit of the doubt to all the people of *Tawhīd*, knowing that true magnification is only for God, and that none of those bows bear that purpose, but merely permit the observance of lawful needs and courtesies.

CHAPTER 15

The Two Testimonies Are Mandatory For Entering Islam

We have already mentioned that since belief in the Two Testimonies is essential in Islam, someone who affirms the oneness of God but denies the Message cannot be considered a Muslim. We should now state that it is a condition for anyone wanting to enter Islam to utter the Two Testimonies together, beginning with the word *ashhadu* ["I testify"]. This phrase implies certain knowledge, submission of the heart, and belief so true that it is as though the matter in which one sets this certainty and faith were actually visible and tangible. One must say, "*Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa'llāh, wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan rasūlu'llāh.*" It is not sufficient to say "*Lā ilāha illa'llāh*" without the words "*ashhadu*" and "*Muḥammadan rasūlu'llāh.*"

Someone at whose hands a person becomes a Muslim must teach him the Two Testimonies, or their equivalent in any other language in words which express their meaning and negate anything contrary to it. This must be accompanied by a complete lack of hesitation, and by the renunciation of every religion other than Islam. When someone comes to him wanting Islam, he should make haste to teach him the Two Testimonies and should not delay. Even if one

is on the pulpit giving the Friday sermon, he should come down, have the person say the Two Testimonies, and then return to the pulpit; for his sermon will not be invalidated by this, whereas for him to delay would mean that he is contented to see this person remain a disbeliever, when he has already come in submission. And to be contented with disbelief is itself disbelief. After all, there is a risk that the man might happen to die before being taught the Two Testimonies. Neither should anyone take any material reward for teaching the Testimonies or for inviting people to Islam, for these are duties, and the reward for them is with God. A man who receives any such material remuneration would be trading with his religion and will repel people from Islam, whereby he would be deprived of an abundant reward. The man at whose hands someone accepts Islam shall enter the Garden, for the Prophet ﷺ has said, "The Garden is the obligatory reward of anyone at whose hands someone becomes a Muslim."[48]

CHAPTER 16

Things that Must Be Taught First

The first things which must be taught to someone who has just entered Islam are those which are indispensable and without which Islam does not exist, such as the foundations of religion, which are:

1. Knowledge of the obligation of performing the five ritual Prayers: how they are done, their conditions, their times, and the method of purifying oneself.
2. Knowledge of the obligatory *Zakāt* [Charity]: the amount due and the time at which it becomes obligatory.
3. Knowledge of the obligatory Fast of Ramadan: its conditions and what invalidates it.
4. Knowledge of the obligation of *Hajj* [Pilgrimage] for those who have the ability: what this ability consists of and the details of the rites.
5. Knowledge of all other individual obligations and of the forbidden things one may fall into, such as adultery, homosexuality, intoxicating drinks, treachery, murder, theft, lying, backbiting, calumny, and so on.

6. Knowledge of the necessary conditions for the validity of selling and buying, social transactions, marriage, and whatever else he may need to know.

All of this must be conveyed wisely and gently, so that the heart is attracted and given the security that comes with familiarity. Doubts and ambiguities which may have been stirred within him by the adversaries of Islam before he entered it must be removed by clear explanations backed by evidence, so that the truths of Islam may take firm root in him and the insinuations of Satan and other insidious falsehoods may be eliminated.

One of the most important things that one should know is what is necessary with regard to God (Exalted is He!), what is impossible, and what is possible. This can be done by studying any comprehensive creed which accords with the doctrine of the People of the *Sunna* and *Jamāʿa*, such as the one written by Ḥujjat al-Islām al-Ghazālī or the one composed by Imām ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād. It is also necessary to know the names of our Prophet ﷺ, the names of his father and mother, the fact that he was born and became a Prophet in Makka, and then emigrated to Madīna where he died and was buried. One should also know some of his miracles, virtues, traits of character, and whatever else a Muslim ought not to be in ignorance of.

The following is the text of the creed of Imām al-Ḥaddād. I have chosen it for its brevity and comprehensiveness, since it contains everything which the People of the *Sunna* and *Jamāʿa* consider to be necessary knowledge. Adopt it and hold fast to it, for *it is pure milk, a delight to those who drink it* (QURAN, 16:66).

CHAPTER 17

The Creed of Imām al-Haddād

Imām al-Ḥaddād said (God bring us benefit from him):

Praise belongs to God alone. May God's blessings and peace be upon our master Muhammad, his Family, and Companions. We know, assent, believe, confess with certainty, and testify that there is no god but God, alone without partner. He is a Mighty God, a Great King. There is no lord beside Him, and we worship none other than Him. He is Ancient and pre-Existent, Eternal and Everlasting. His firstness has no beginning, His lastness no end. He is Solitary, Self-Subsistent, neither begetting nor begotten, matchless, without partner or peer: *There is nothing that resembles Him, and He is the Hearing, the Seeing* (QURAN, 42:11).

And we confess that His holiness (Exalted is He!) renders Him beyond time and space, beyond resembling anything in existence, so that He cannot be encompassed by directions, nor be subject to contingent events; and that He is established on His Throne in the manner which He has described, and in the sense which He has intended, in an Establishment befitting the might of His majesty, and the exaltation of His glory and magnificence; and that He (Exalted is He!) is near to everything in existence, being *closer to man than his jugular vein* (QURAN, 50:16). He is Watchful, Witness over all

things. He is *the Living, the Sustainer, slumber overtakes Him not, nor sleep* (QURAN, 2:255); *He is the Originator of the heavens and earth; when He decrees a thing He only says to it "Be!" and it is* (QURAN, 2:117); *God is Creator of all things, and He is Guardian over everything* (QURAN, 39:62).

And He (Exalted is He!) is over all things Powerful, and of all things Knower; His knowledge is all-embracing and He keeps count of all things. *Not an atom's weight*[49] *in the earth or in the sky escapes your Lord* (QURAN, 10:61); *He knows what goes down into the earth and that which come forth from it, and what descends from heaven and what ascends into it. He is with you wherever you may be, and God sees all what you do* (QURAN, 57:4); *He knows the secret thought, and what is even more concealed* (QURAN, 20:7); *He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls except that He knows it, nor is there a grain amid the darkness of the earth, nor a wet or withered thing, but that it is recorded in a clear Book* (QURAN, 6:59).

And He (Exalted is He!) wills existent things and directs events. And nothing may exist, whether good or evil, beneficial or harmful, except by His decree and will. Whatever He wills *is*, whatever He does not *is not*. Should all creatures unite to move or halt a single atom in the universe, in the absence of His will, they would be unable to do so.

And He (Exalted is He!) is All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Speaker of a Speech that is pre-existent and does not resemble the speech of creatures. And that the Mighty Quran is His ancient speech, His Book which He sent down upon His Messenger and Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

And He (Transcendent is He!) is Creator of all things and their Provider, who disposes them as He wills; neither rival nor opponent is there in His realm. He gives to whomsoever He wills and withholds from whomsoever He wills. *He is not questioned about His actions, rather they [His creatures] shall be questioned* (QURAN, 21:23)

And He (Exalted is He!) is Wise in His acts and Just in His decrees, so that no injustice or tyranny can be imaginable on His part and that no one has any rights over Him. Should He (Transcendent is

He!) destroy all His creatures in the blink of an eye, He would be neither unjust nor tyrannous to them, for they are His dominion and His servants. He has the right to do as He pleases in His dominion: *and your Lord is never unjust to His servants* (QURAN, 41:46). He rewards His servants for obeying Him out of grace and generosity, and punishes them, when they rebel, out of His wisdom and justice.

To obey Him is an obligation binding upon His servants, as was made clear through the speech of His Messengers (peace be upon them).

We believe in every Book sent down by God, and in all of His Messengers, His angels, and in destiny, whether good or bad.

And we testify that Muḥammad is His servant and Messenger, whom He sent to jinn and to mankind, to Arabs and non-Arabs, *with guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to prevail over all religion, though the idolaters may dislike it* (QURAN, 9:33). And we testify that he delivered the Message, was faithful to his trust, advised the Nation, did away with grief, and strove for God's sake as is His due, being truthful and trustworthy, supported by authentic proofs and supernatural miracles. And God has made it incumbent upon His servants to believe, obey, and follow him, and that a man's faith is not acceptable—even should he believe in God—until he believes in Muḥammad (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his Family) and in everything that he brought and informed us of, whether of the affairs of this world or the next. This includes faith in the questioning of the dead by [the angels] Munkar and Nakīr[50] about religion, *Tawḥīd*, and Prophethood; and faith that life in the grave will be blissful for those who were obedient, and full of torment for the rebellious.

And one should believe in the Resurrection after death, the gathering of bodies and spirits to stand in the presence of God the Exalted, and in the Reckoning; and that His servants will be at that time in different states, some being called to account, some pardoned, while others shall enter the Garden without reckoning. One should believe in the Scales in which good and evil deeds will be weighed; and in

> the *Ṣirat,* which is a bridge stretched over the depths of Hell; and in the Pool [*Hawd*] of our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the water of which is from the Garden, and from which the believers shall drink before entering the Garden. And one should believe in the intercession of the Prophets, followed by the *siddīqūn,* the martyrs [*shuhadā'*], and then the scholars, the virtuous [*salihīn*], and the other believers. And that the greatest intercession is the prerogative of Muhammad ﷺ. And the people of *Tawhīd* who have entered the Fire shall be taken out of it until not one person in whose heart lies an atom's weight of faith shall remain in it perpetually. And the people of idolatry and disbelief shall abide in the Fire perpetually and for evermore: *Their suffering shall not be diminished; nor shall they be reprieved* (QURAN, 2:162). And the believers shall abide in the Garden perpetually and without end, *wherein no tiredness shall affect them, and from which they shall not be expelled* (QURAN, 15:48). And the believers shall see their Lord with their eyes, in a way befitting His Majesty and the Holiness of His Perfection.
>
> And the Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ were virtuous, their status was of various ranks, and they were just, good, and trustworthy. It is not lawful to insult or denigrate any of them. And the rightful successor [*khalīfa*] to the Messenger of God ﷺ was Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, followed by ʿUmar al-Farūq, then ʿUthmān al-Shahīd, then ʿAlī al-Murtada, may God be pleased with them and with all his other Companions, and with those who follow them with excellence until the Day of Judgment, and with us also, by Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the Merciful!

Such is the rightly-guided creed, which conforms to the Book and the *Sunna.* No male or female Muslim should be ignorant of it. Without affirming it, one's faith is not sound. It is not a condition that every person should be able to articulate it fluently; rather, what counts is what lies in the heart.

CHAPTER 18

Merits of the Noble Phrase

We shall now point out some of the merits of this noble phrase [of *Tawhīd*], and the subtleties and exalted secrets contained in its invocation. One of these was referred to by the Prophet ﷺ when he said, "He whose last words in the world are *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* shall enter the Garden."[51] And he ﷺ said, "The people of *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* shall suffer no desolation in their graves. It is as though I can see them coming out of their graves, shaking the dust off their heads, saying, '*Praise be to God, who has removed sadness from us; our Lord is indeed Forgiving, Thankful*' (QURAN, 35:34)."[52] And he ﷺ said, "The best invocation is *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*."[53] And he ﷺ said, "The best thing that I and the Prophets before me ever said is *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*."[54] And [the Prophet] ﷺ said that his Lord declared, "Truly, I am God; there is no god but Me. Whosoever affirms My Oneness enters My fortress, and whosoever enters My fortress shall be safe from My chastisement."[55] And he ﷺ said, "Renew your faith." "How should we renew our faith?" he was asked. He said: "Say *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* many times."[56] And he ﷺ said, "*Subhān'Allāh* is half the balance; *al-Hamdulillāh* fills it; and there is no veil between *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* and God until it reaches

Him."[57] And he ﷺ said, "The one who testifies that there is no god but God, that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, that Jesus was the servant of God and was His word cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him, that the Garden is real and the Fire is real, shall enter the Garden according to his deeds."[58] And in Imām Muslim's version: "God renders the Fire forbidden for a person who affirms that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God."[59] And he ﷺ said, "Anyone who says *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* with sincere single-heartedness shall enter the Garden." He was asked, "O Messenger of God, what does sincere single-heartedness consist of?" And he answered, "It restrains him from the things which God has forbidden."[60] And he said, "Make those of you who are dying repeat *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*, for it wipes away all preceding sins."[61] And he said to Mu'ādh [ibn Jabal], "O Mu'ādh, no one affirms single-heartedly that 'there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His Messenger' but that God renders the Fire forbidden to him."[62] And he said ﷺ, "God has forbidden to the Fire anyone who says *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* for His sake."[63] And he said to Abū Hurayra (may God be pleased with him), "Go, and whoever you find on the other side of this wall who affirms *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* with certainty in his heart, give him glad tidings that he shall enter the Garden."[64]

A bedouin once came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "O Messenger of God! What are the two inevitable things?" And he replied, 'Whoever dies without having associated anything with God shall enter the Garden, and whoever dies associating something with God shall enter the Fire."[65] It is said that Moses said, "O Lord, teach me something with which I can remember and pray to You." And He said, "O Moses, say *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*." "Lord!" he replied, "All Your servants say that." [God] said, "O Moses! If the seven heavens and their inhabitants, and the seven earths were in one hand of a balance, and *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* was in the other, *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* would outweigh them all."[66] And the Prophet ﷺ once asked Mu'ādh

ibn Jabal, "Do you know what is God's right over His servants, and what right His servants have over God?" And he replied, "God and His Messenger know best." "God's right over His servants," he told him, "is that they should worship Him and not associate anything with Him. And the right of His servants over Him is that He will not torment anyone who does not associate anything with Him." "O Messenger of God!" Muʿādh said, "Shall I not give people the good news?" And he told him, "Do not, for they would rely on it."[67]

And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Gabriel once came to me and said, 'Give your nation the good news that he who dies not having associated anything with God shall enter the Garden.' I then said, 'O Gabriel! Even if one had committed theft and adultery?' 'Yes!' he said. And I asked, 'Even if he had committed theft and adultery?' 'Yes!' he said. And I asked, 'Even if he had committed theft and adultery?' And he replied, 'Yes, even if he used to drink wine.'"[68]

CHAPTER 19

Good and Bad Endings to Life

To die believing in *Tawḥīd* and Islam is the ultimate happiness this life has to offer. A Muslim continually implores and asks God to make him die a Muslim, and this is how God has described His Prophets and the righteous among His servants. He has stated that Joseph said, "*You are my Patron in this world and in the next; make me die a Muslim, and make me join the virtuous*" (QURAN, 12:101). And He has said that Abraham and Jacob exhorted their children to die as Muslims: *And Abraham exhorted his sons, as did Jacob: "My sons, God has chosen for you the religion: therefore, die not save as Muslims!"* (QURAN, 2:132).

One should strive properly to guard one's Islam and to strengthen it by complying with God's commands. A person who neglects God's commands exposes himself to the risk of dying outside Islam, for his lack of obedience is proof of his low opinion of the rights religion has over him. One should avoid transgressions and sins, for these weaken one's Islam, shake its foundations, and put one in danger of it being snatched away at the time of death. Likewise, one should continually ask God for a good ending, so that one dies with the Testimony, and one should dread a bad ending, for it leads

to perdition. God turns men's hearts: *He guides whom He wills and sends astray whom He wills* (QURAN, 74:31).

Know that a large proportion of those who suffer an evil end consists of people who neglect their obligatory ritual Prayer and *Zakāt*, ferret out the hidden faults of other Muslims, and who *cheat when giving measure and weight* (QURAN, 11:84), and deceive, defraud, and delude other Muslims in matters of religion. Similar are those who detract from the Prophetic *Sunna*, and call for a reduction in its status by creating suspicions and doubts about it, despite the fact that it is the greatest collection of Prophetic literature in human history. No Prophet has had so much preserved of his sayings, acts, and states as our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. The *Sunna* contains an unrivalled collection of legislation, social organization, extraordinary concepts, and comprehensive sciences. The *imāms* of hadith took the greatest care in recording each of them, and in investigating both the chains of transmission and the text of each hadith report, so that they could distinguish between those hadiths that were authentic and those that were not. They furnished the nation with the best of these, which were then applied for purposes of legislation and for setting forth everything which would enable Muslims to emulate and be guided by the *Sunna* of the trustworthy Prophet ﷺ.

The adversaries of Islam, to whom we have referred, drew the inspiration for their repellent ploy from the Orientalists, and made use of an inauthentic hadith which runs: "Those of my hadiths which come down to you should be compared with the Book of God; if they conform to it, then they are from me, whereas if they conflict with it they are not." This statement, which was cited by Goldziher in his book *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, is falsely attributed to the Messenger of God (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family). The text which has been authentically transmitted from him is this: "May I never find one of you reclining

on a couch and speaking about a hadith of mine by saying, 'I do not find this judgment in the Quran.' For assuredly, I have been given the Quran and as much again in addition."[69] Similarly, Abū Dāwūd has related on the authority of al-ʿIrbāḍ ibn Sāriya al-Sulamī that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Does one of you, while reclining on his couch, think that God the Exalted has only forbidden things in the Quran? Rather, I have commanded, advised, and forbidden as many things as there are in the Quran, or even more. God the Exalted has not allowed you to enter the houses of the People of the Book without obtaining permission, nor to hit their women, nor to eat their fruits, as long as they give you your due."[70]

CHAPTER 20

The Sunna*: the Second Source of the* Sharī'a

You have learned that the *Sunna* consists of the sayings, acts, and approvals of the Messenger of God (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family). You should be aware that the *Sunna* is also revelation, but not to be recited [as the Quran is recited]. God has said (Exalted is He!), *[The Prophet] does not speak from his own whim; it is but an inspired revelation* (QURAN, 53:3). And He has said, *He has sent down upon you the Book and the Wisdom, and taught you that which you did not know. Indeed, the favor of God upon you is great* (QURAN, 4:113). The "Book" is the Quran, and the "Wisdom" [*hikma*] is the *Sunna*. They were sent down through revelation [*wahy*] and inspiration [*ilhām*]. The Quran stands distinguished from the *Sunna* in that its words were revealed by God in their Arabic form. It is a miracle that humans cannot emulate, for no one can imitate it or compose anything which resembles even the shortest of its suras: a miracle spanning the ages, protected from changes and interpolations. The Quran is possessed of other properties that do not hold true for the *Sunna*, such as the fact that its mere recitation brings a reward from God and that it is forbidden to paraphrase it, and that touching or carrying it when in

a state of impurity is forbidden. Hadiths, whether *qudsī* or not, are not possessed of such properties.

The *Sunna* is a clarification and an explanation of the Quran. God has said (Exalted is He!), *We have sent the Remembrance down upon you that you may make clear to mankind that which was sent down to them, in order that they may reflect* (QURAN, 16:44). The Prophet ﷺ elucidated and explained in detail, in his words, deeds, and approval or disapproval of other people's acts, what had been set forth in more general terms in the Book. For example, the number of *rak'as* in each ritual Prayer, their times, conditions, and *sunnas;* the thresholds of *Zakāt*, and on what kind of assets it is payable; similarly the Fast (of Ramadan), the rites of the *Hajj* and *'Umra*, their foundations, conditions, what invalidates them, and many other things. The *Sunna* furnishes us with rules which are not mentioned in detail in the Book, concerning transactions, courtesies, moral traits, and virtues which regulate people's lives. These have been handed down from the Prophet ﷺ whom God has commanded us to emulate. God has said (Exalted is He!), *In the Messenger of God you have a good example, for those who set their hope in God and the Last Day* (QURAN, 33:21); and *Say [O Muhammad], "If you love God, follow me and God will love you"* (QURAN, 13:31). The obedient servant who follows the example of the Greatest Beloved (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family), becomes beloved by God, by virtue of his love of His Beloved.

How excellent are the verses of poetry of Laylā's mad lover (Majnūn):

He saw Laylā and shunned all others.
A lover who sees beauty only in her,
He has won, and gained a great kingdom,
If she sees him in the way he sees her.

God the Exalted has said, *Obey God and the Messenger. If you turn away, Our Messenger's task is only to convey [the message] clearly* (QURAN, 64:12); *Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed God* (QURAN, 4:80); and *Take whatever the Messenger gives you, and refrain from what he has forbidden you* (QURAN, 59:7). What matters in each of these verses is the generality of the instructions, not the particular occasion on which each of them was revealed; therefore every instruction and prohibition he gave constitutes a general principle. There are many other verses and many hadiths in which this is made clear. For instance, the Prophet ﷺ said, "The whole of my nation shall enter the Garden except those who refuse." Upon being asked, "And who are those who refuse, O Messenger of God?" he said, "Those who obey me shall enter the Garden, and those who disobey me shall have refused."[74] And God the Exalted has said, *No, by your Lord! They shall not be believers until they make you the judge in their disputes, and then find no annoyance within themselves at what you decide, and submit entirely* (QURAN, 4:65); and *Let those who conspire to disobey his orders beware lest a trial afflict them, or a painful torment* (QURAN, 24:63).

In His Book, God the Exalted has commanded that the *Sunna* of His Prophet ﷺ be followed. This was made a duty and an obligation, and therefore no faith can be sound without it. To deny that the *Sunna* should be followed is disbelief because it is a denial of what has been stated in the Quran. This is the reason why the Muslims have taken such great care with hadith, from the days of the Companions until the present. As already mentioned, these were recorded and transmitted verbally and in writing, and researched in the most profound manner as regards their memorization, accuracy, recording, and freedom from flaws. Only those whose faith is defective regarding the one who brought the *Sunna* would detract from its value or altogether snub it; by so doing they would

set themselves outside the consensus, method, and doctrine of the Muslims, and would show themselves to be either ignorant of Islam or its blatant foes.

CHAPTER 21

An Observation

It is necessary for anyone who wishes to derive judgments of *Sharī'a* from the two sources, which are the Book and the *Sunna*, to be fully versed in both, in the way set out in the science of the Principles of Jurisprudence [*Uṣūl al-Fiqh*]. He must also have a mastery of classical Arabic, including rhetoric and the other well-known disciplines, for this is the indispensable tool for understanding the "Clear Arabic Book," whose supremacy of style and variety of expression attain to the level of the miraculous; and [it is required also] for understanding the *Sunna* that has been transmitted from the most eloquent man ever to speak Arabic and from his Companions, who were unsurpassed in their eloquence.

It is not permissible for anyone lacking any of these tools to undertake this grave matter, for he would go astray and lead others astray, thereby committing a monstrous sin.

CHAPTER 22

The Sedition of the Literal Translation of the Quran

This is a sedition that had long been dormant, may God curse those who have awakened it! It is the rambling of those who have failed to acknowledge the real rank of the Quran or to accept its miraculous inimitability [*iʿjāz*]. These people undertook to translate the Quran by replacing every locution with another from a different language, claiming that the result corresponded to the original, communicated the same meanings, and performed the same functions; a patently false claim, for no translation could possibly do justice to the Quran's meanings, purposes, and aims. It would be devoid of its qualities of eloquent clear expression, the secrets of its inimitable miraculousness, the awe it inspires, and its majesty. There can be no possible comparison between the clarity and eloquence of the Quran and that delirious nonsense. God is the One who has sent down the Book, and He has rendered all creatures incapable of producing anything like it, even in another language. He has said, *Were all humans and jinn to unite to produce the like of this Quran, they would not be able to produce its like, even if they were helpers of one another* (QURAN, 17:88). This is why the scholars all agreed that it is impossible to translate the Quran literally in any way that

would truly correspond to it and reproduce its meanings and intents, or convey its secrets and special properties. The productions of those who have had the audacity to try are very far-off indeed from the Quran, and represent an obvious attempt to tamper with its holiness. Their purpose is to render the Quran superfluous, reduce its influence, profane its sanctity, and prevent those who read their translations from seeing its grandeur, the beauty of its style, the blessedness of its expression, and its awe-inspiring majesty.

The Imam of the Age, the learned Ḥabīb Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭās (may God have mercy on him), has said, "The words of God and the words of His Messenger are meant to address both hearts and bodies, physical forms and spirits, images and meanings. Now people have begun to translate the Quran into Javanese, Indian, and other languages, when God the Exalted has said, *An Arabic Quran, with no crookedness* (QURAN, 39:28), indicating that the discourse of men must be to some extent crooked, however perfect they may become, unlike the discourse of God the Exalted."

As for literal translations which lay no claim to an identical status, they are less perilous than the sort discussed above, but are still incapable of reproducing the meanings of the verses or of possessing the unique aspects of eloquence, or the secrets of the Quran's miraculousness. A considerable number of the hazards mentioned above still apply.

Anyone who wishes to translate the Quran literally will be wishing to alter its miraculous quality, change its purposes, and destroy the Arabic form which God has intended for it and on which the Islamic Arabic union has arisen. Never have we heard of any of the early Muslims from the Prophetic days onward, undertaking such translations. Their goal was to preserve the majesty of the Quran, its properties, and the language in which it was sent down from God the Exalted upon the heart of the Master of Messengers, *in a clear Arabic speech* (QURAN, 16:103). For this reason, when

somebody wanted to translate the Quran in Egypt in this manner, the scholars stood out against him very strongly, and people of all orientations wrote to condemn him. Nor should anyone think that literal translation is necessary for the spreading of the summons to Islam. Had it been so, the Messenger ﷺ would have done it, for he was sent to the Arabs and the non-Arabs alike, and the Quran itself would have demanded it explicitly, and the scholars of the first era would have done it while they were spreading Islam. All that is required according to the *Sharī'a* is to convey the rules of Islam, its teachings and merits, and to spread the banners and proofs of *Tawḥīd*, as is shown in the Quran and the Prophetic *Sunna*. That is why in those golden days nobody undertook any translations of this sort.

However, to translate only the meanings of the Quran and the sayings of the reliable commentators into any language is required, although it must be done by those who can translate well, and without altering the original meanings. In this way those who know no Arabic, or not enough, will be able to know the true nature of the Islamic call and what it involves, through the meanings of the Quranic verses, and this is what Muslims have been doing ever since the scholars started writing commentaries on the Quran.

CHAPTER 23

Contempt for the Rank of Religion

Akin to this sedition, and incompatible with solid adherence to the Islamic rules and courtesies that pertain to the worship that fulfills one's obligations to the Divine, is the ascendance of some pretenders in certain countries into positions which have enabled them to deliver legal judgments [*fatwā*s]. They attempt to solve problems that have newly presented themselves though they have neither studied the principles [*uṣūl*] nor the jurisprudence at the hands of a real master who knows the texts; nor have they been accredited [*ijāza*] or permitted to lecture—let alone give legal judgments—by those qualified to give such authorizations. Were you to require any of them to recite a verse, a hadith, or indeed any other sentence, he might well fail to pronounce or inflect it correctly, let alone analyze its meanings. How then could such a person use it to arrive at judgments?

This is happening at a time when in those Islamic countries in which knowledge is more abundant you find that people who occupy positions that require them to give legal judgments only reach them after gaining experience in the disciplines of the *Sharī'a*, being tested and examined, and being accredited by those who

know them well and are able to gauge their fitness. They are then confirmed in their position by the political ruler. By such people does the general working of the *Sharīʿa* become well regulated, and people are able to seek the shade of its justice.

People in positions of judgment regarding other kinds of laws are not given [these positions] until they have expended most of their youth studying and researching, after which they must be accredited by experts. If this is the case with regard to human opinions, how then should the pure *Sharīʿa* revealed by God be treated? Do you know how they give somebody the position of *muftī* in those areas? They just pick him up from the roadside and entrust him with matters of *Sharīʿa* of which he had never even been aware; he then proceeds to make shortsighted guesses, ride on a blind horse, and produce catastrophes, the holes of which cannot be patched and the cracks of which cannot be filled.

The Messenger of God ﷺ spoke the truth when he said, "God does not remove knowledge by seizing it from people, but by seizing the scholars [in death], until, when none of them remain, people will choose ignorant leaders who when asked will give legal judgments not based on knowledge, such that they go astray and lead others astray." This hadith contains a dire warning not to seek legal judgments from the ignorant nor to follow their pronouncements. It is also a powerful threat to those who give legal judgments without being possessed of knowledge, for it brands such a person as one who has himself strayed and is leading others astray. If those self-deceivers knew how hazardous their attitude was, and that they stand on the very precipice of Hell, they would retreat from their fearful position. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā said, "I have met a hundred and twenty of the Helpers [*Anṣār*] from the Companions of the Messenger of God ﷺ. One of them would be asked a question, and would refer it to another, who would in his turn refer it to somebody else, and so on until it came back to the first

one." Al-Sha'bī, al-Hasan, and Abū Hasīn, who were among the Followers [*Tābi'īn*][73] said, "You give legal judgments on problems which, had they been set before 'Umar ibn al-Khattāb, would have made him gather the People of Badr [to answer them]."[74] Imām al-Ghazālī compared these self-deceivers to an old woman who, upon hearing that warriors were being registered at the Sultan's court to receive donations, put on a suit of amour, picked up some weapons, and went to court. The Sultan ordered his men to test her in combat and swordsmanship but without her amour. When her helmet was removed from her head and her amour from her body, she was revealed as an old woman. Someone then said, "This is utter irreverence for the throne; let her be taken and made an example of!" *And who is more unjust than one who invents lies concerning God, so that he may lead people astray without knowledge?* (QURAN, 16:144).

CHAPTER 24

Disbelief and Denial

Now that we have treated some of the things one must know about *Tawḥīd* and faith, we should make reference to some matters which pertain to their opposites, namely disbelief and denial, for "things become clear through their opposites." The clarification of these matters provides a lesson for the perceptive, a warning against evil and sedition, and protection from the wrath and punishment of God.

Disbelief is the greatest ignorance and the most hideous injustice. It is the covering up and abandonment of the primordial nature [*fitra*] that God has created in human beings. What ignorance can be more malignant and bitter than that of a man who does not know his Lord or acknowledge His oneness, and attributes partners and equals to Him from among His creatures? How is it that he does not know who created him and gave him form, gave him hearing and sight, made him well proportioned, and placed in him the ability to reason and the faculty of inspiration? Yet he refuses to trust in His clear signs and submit to the manifest truth. He can observe that all things, in every corner of this universe, proclaim (with the tongue of their nature) the skill and excellence of their creation; yet his reason

does not lead him to the knowledge of this Formidable Creator, who is Able and Wise, who brought them out of the void and into existence. Who brought metals, rocks and trees into being, and has given them their properties? Who has synthesized carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sodium, calcium, and all other substances that lack both life and reason, and has then made them the sustenance of living creatures and possessed of such great benefit? How long must it take for such a blind-hearted denier to find his way toward sound knowledge and balanced reasoning? From the outset he has covered himself up with the darkness of ignorance, and then wrapped himself up in the cloak of disbelief for the remainder of his life, going against the primordial Muslim nature [*fitra*] in which his heart, body, and senses were created, by immersing them in the shadows of submission and surrender to what is not God. Concerning such people Imām al-Ḥaddād has said:

Impeded are the doubters
as though they were not here.
Away with those who doubt
the truth when it is clear!

Who is more unjust than he who spends his whole life wronging everything, including himself, his faculties, and his reason? They will all bear witness against him and testify to his crime and mismanagement of his affairs—before the just court of God; even the land on which he walked and on which he lived in rebellion against God [shall bear witness against him].

God has truthfully said, *It is the disbelievers who are unjust* (QURAN, 2:254), that is, [unjust] to themselves and to others. And He has said, *Truly, disbelief is a enormous wrong* (QURAN, 31:13); and *It will not profit you today, for you have been unjust, that you shall share in the torment* (QURAN, 43:39).

The disbeliever denies the favors that God has showered upon him from every direction, and the things that He has subjected to

his use. He applies his reason for other than the good pleasure of God, and belittles the rank of his Lord. He is like someone who is given a burnished sword to wear in a parade, to strike at enemies, and to use in upholding justice and maintaining security, but who then makes for piles of dust, stones, and filth, which he assails violently left and right. Can there be any more eloquent proof of his idiocy and insanity? And yet we see him firing accusations of ungratefulness and denial against someone who has pretended to forget the kindness which he owes to someone, and accusations of tyranny and rebellion against an employee who acts against the government's interest, or a citizen who breaks its laws. Tell me, by God, is there any rebellion or disbelief greater than that of a man's disbelief in God, who created him, provided for him, taught him, and gave him speech? [Is there greater rebellion than] one who refuses to acknowledge God's divinity and then attributed one of His creatures as an associate to Him and turns away from acknowledging His Oneness and obeying His commands? Such a man's rebellion and disbelief are in effect directed against only himself, for he cannot do God any harm: O *mankind, your rebellion is only against yourselves; [yours will be] the enjoyment of this life, then unto Us shall you return, and We shall inform you of what you used to do* (QURAN, 10:23).

CHAPTER 25

People of Disbelief Are Legion

The fiercest and most presumptuous disbelievers are the atheists. They have drowned into the depths of denial, so that their hearts and brows are stamped with wretchedness and ingratitude. The communists are one example.[75] Not only do they deny the Creator, the Messengers, and the message which they brought, but out of hatred and arrogance, going to the extreme in disbelief and cruelty, they abuse people of faith and insult their religion using words which the heart trembles to remember and the pen hesitates to record.

They include also the idolaters *who set up some other god beside God* (QURAN, 15:96), and those who ascribe unto Him children and a female companion. And there are some who believe in incarnation [*hulul*], who, claiming that God has become incarnate in certain physical bodies, make of those bodies gods to be worshipped and *loved in the way that God should be loved* (QURAN, 2:165). They make pictures and statues of them to which they bow their heads, kneel, and prostrate.[76]

In his commentary on the Quran, Ibn Kathīr states:

> The Jews will be brought on the Day of Arising and asked, "What

did you worship?" "God and Ezra,"[77] they will reply. Then they will be told, "Go to the left side!" Then the Christians will be brought and asked, "What did you worship?" And they say, "God and the Messiah." "Go to the left side!" they will be commanded. Then the idolaters will be brought and told, "*Lā ilāha illa'llāh,*" and they will arrogantly refuse. Again they will be told, "*Lā ilāha illa'llāh,*" and again they will arrogantly refuse. Once more it will be said to them "*Lā ilāha illa'llāh,*" and once more they will arrogantly refuse, and they will be told to go to the left side. Scholars[78] have said, "They will fly in that direction swifter than birds." Then the Muslims will be brought and asked, "What did you worship?" "We worshipped God," comes their reply. "Would you recognize Him if you saw Him?" they are asked, and they say, "Yes indeed!" Then they are asked, "How could you know Him when you have never seen Him?" and they say, "We know that He is incomparable." So God (Exalted, Holy, and Blessed is He!) will make Himself known to them and save the believers.

CHAPTER 26

Different Kinds of Idolatry

Idolatry [*shirk*], like disbelief [*kufr*], is a covering up of the obvious truth. There is "major idolatry," which expels a man from the faith, and "minor idolatry" (instances of which include ostentation and some sins), which does not. It is therefore appropriate to quote what one of correct doctrine says about idolatry. Its kinds—may God protect us!—are six:

1. Autonomous idolatry [*shirk istiqlāl*]. This is to affirm the existence of two autonomous deities, as is the case with the Zoroastrians.

2. Separative idolatry [*shirk tabʿīḍ*]. An instance of this is the Christians who say that God is one of three, the other two being Jesus and his mother.[79]

3. Approximative idolatry [*shirk taqrīb*]. This is to worship other than God with the purpose of drawing nearer to Him through them. Such was the belief of the early Arabs who worshipped stones, saying, "*We only worship them so that they may bring us closer to God*" (QURAN, 39:3).

4. Imitative idolatry [*shirk taqlīd*]. This involves worshipping other than God in imitation of others. This also was the form

of idolatry prevalent in the pre-Islamic era of ignorance. *They say, "We found our fathers following a religion, and by their footsteps shall we be led"* (QURAN, 43:22).

5. Idolatry of secondary causes [*shirk al-asbāb*].[80] An instance of this is the idolatry of the philosophers and those who believe in *nature*, and those who follow them.

6. Idolatry of intention [*shirk al-aghrāḍ*].[81] This is to carry out acts for other than God.

The unanimous ruling regarding the first four is that they are forms of disbelief. The sixth is a sin but does not constitute disbelief. As for the fifth, a distinction has to be made between, first, those who say that secondary causes [in themselves] produce effects by virtue of their intrinsic properties [as, for example, fire leading to burning, water to irrigating, and food to satiety]: such people are disbelievers; second, those who believe that they are effective through a power that God the Exalted has put in them: they are guilty of an innovation [*bid'a*].

There is another sect, the Antinomians [*al-Ibāḥīya*] who consider themselves to be Muslims but in reality are in opposition to Islam. They have deserted its teachings, in doctrine and in practice, and take pride in imitating the adversaries of Islam in most of their behavior and customs. They imitate them fanatically in doing things Islam has definitively forbidden, such as selling and drinking intoxicating liquor and eating pork. They have no connection with Islam, apart from the fact that they have uttered the Two Testimonies, outwardly conforming to and imitating Muslims, while inwardly harboring what is wholly opposite. They derive no benefit from pronouncing the phrase of *Tawḥīd,* however often they repeat it, as long as they deny it in their hearts and by their deeds, unless they repent to God of what they committed, return to right guidance and wisdom, believe with certainty and sincerity in its meaning, and genuinely act in accordance with it. God will then accept their repentance, for He

(Exalted is He!) is Forgiving and Merciful.

Another such sect is that of the Qadiyānīs. This group is more of an affliction to Islam than many of the other sects that are in transgression and error. Its members follow the accursed imposter Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad, who was created by the British as a fifth column. He claimed divinity and prophethood, asserted that he was the Messiah, the Mahdī, and the Renovator of Religion and Islam, all in one. What fraud and sedition is this? Muslims unanimously agree that anyone who claims prophethood after our master Muḥammad ﷺ is an obstinate disbeliever. Musaylima the Liar claimed it, God curse him! So did the woman Sajāḥ, and al-Aswad al-ʿAnsī and others. They were all confounded and exposed by God before the spread of Islam. Today, succeeding generations have lived according to the doctrines of Islam, and it is indispensable to believe that Muḥammad was the Seal of the Prophets, as is stated in the Quran and further elaborated in the *Sunna*. Mirza Ghulām Aḥmad attempted to attack the prophethood of the Last and Seal of the Prophets, break its invincible seal, and destroy the latest and final stone set into the building of Prophecy. In this way he challenged the Muslim world with his disbelief, imposture, and the insinuations of his demon, thus conspiring against Islam and helping its adversaries everywhere. In fact, he was more accursed and vile than Musaylima the Liar and others who have claimed prophethood, for he pretended outwardly to be a Muslim. He deceived some ruffians for whom God had decreed damnation, *and led them to the Fire: an evil place to be led to* (QURAN, 11:98). He was assisted in this by surreptitious influences, publications originating in certain Jewish circles, and by various weavers of intrigues against Islam.

This accursed man provided places for [his followers] to perform pilgrimages in the town of Qadiyān in preference to the Sacred House, with the intention of obliterating the landmarks of religion, outraging the sensibilities of the Muslims, and pleasing his English

masters and the traitors who assisted them. These places are still in existence today, proclaiming their own disgrace. To confute them it is sufficient to show that they have gone against what is clearly stated in the Book and the *Sunna*, and what the whole nation has agreed upon. That they have done this is proved by the letters of their accursed impostor and their printed literature. The Muslims of today are of the unanimous view that the Qadiyanī sectaries are liars and apostates who have no connection of any kind with Islam. Verdicts to this effect have been issued against them which are clearer than the sun in the noonday sky.

When this distasteful matter was uncovered to the Islamic world, and its shame and that of its followers became public and unmistakable, they moved to areas where Islam was new, such as Uganda, where they propagated their disbelief and their error. They built mosques consecrated to disbelief, published newspapers and other literature with Islamic titles which were filled with misguidance and disbelief, and printed a commentary on the Quran in Latin letters which was full of the alien insinuations of their sect. They were unaware, however, that religion has a Protector, that behind those cubs were lions who guarded them, and that among those new Muslims were people more solicitous for their religion and more attached to it than many who, having inherited Islam from their ancestors, suffered from a *hardness in their hearts with the passage of time* (QURAN, 57:16), and whose covenants had been abrogated. They beheld how a shaykh from among the scholars of Uganda was chosen to challenge them in debate, a date for which was set, and which was attended by a multitude of people, Muslims and others. When the shaykh rapidly silenced them with irrefutable arguments, they quickly retreated and were routed. This day went down on record as their day of shame. *May God Himself fight against them! What falsehood they utter!* (QURAN, 9:30).

CHAPTER 27

Deviation in Religion

Related to disbelief and corresponding to it in many ways is "deviation [*ilhād*] in God's religion." This means to swerve to one side and be deflected, in doctrine and practice, from truth to falsehood, and to belittle and make light of the purport of the Book and the *Sunna*. It is to deviate from rectitude. It can be applied to the Religion of God, His Names, and His Attributes, in the sense of missing the truth with regard to them. God has said, *Those who deviate with respect to Our verses are not hidden from Us* (QURAN, 41:40); and *Leave those who deviate concerning His names; they will be punished for what they have done* (QURAN, 7: 180). Deviation concerning the Names is to derive the names of idols from the names of God the Exalted, as for instance *al-Lāt* from *Allāh*, and *al-'Uzza* from *al-'Azīz*.[83] Deviation regarding the verses (of the Quran) is either to deny that they are from God, as when people said, *He is only taught by a man* (QURAN, 16:103); or to twist them from their obvious meanings by employing diverse kinds of unsound interpretations. Deviation regarding the Attributes occurs when one ascribes attributes pertaining only to [God] the Real—such as lordship and divinity—to others, as the Quran says

concerning the Jews and the Christians: *And the Jews said, "Ezra is the son of God." And the Christians said, "The Messiah is the son of God"* (QURAN, 9:30); and *They took their rabbis and monks as lords instead of God* (QURAN, 9:31). The case of the Qadiyānīs, the Baha'is, and like movements is similar: their deviation is blunt; it proclaims itself to be a failure, and declares those who follow it to be disbelievers and people of the fire.

CHAPTER 28

Other Kinds of Deviation

Another kind of deviation is that which is practiced by some misguided sects who take words from the Quran and the *Sunna,* such as *Salat* [ritual Prayer], *Zakat* [Charity], Fasting, *Hajj* [Pilgrimage], the Garden, and the Fire, and give them false interpretations which are contrary to the meanings intended by [God] the Lawgiver, and which prevent people from acting in conformity with them. They interpret the verses of the Quran in ways which run counter to the traditional commentaries, to its linguistic excellence, to the general rules of the *Sharī'a,* and to sound reasoning. Many trustworthy historians have expounded these things in their writings about misguided sects, like al-Baghdādī in his *Difference Between the Sects,*[84] and Ibn Ḥazm in his *Book of Religions and Sects.*[85] Among these deviants are the Ismā'īlīs, the Bāṭiniya, the Qarāmiṭa,[86] and the extremists among the Shī'a, all of whom have clearly and unquestionably strayed beyond the boundaries of Islam.

Most of these sects—when they proved unable to distort the Quran and change it as it had occurred to the previous revealed scriptures at the hands of rabbis and monks, for they were unable to add or remove from [the Quran] so much as a single verse, word, or

letter, because God the Exalted had guaranteed its protection from such things when He said, *We have sent down the Remembrance, and We shall guard it* (QURAN, 15:9)—had to resort to interpreting it according to their whims. Their corrupt interpretations were intended as an intrigue against Islam and the Muslims, and were aimed at creating religious sedition. However, *God does not guide the intrigues of the treacherous* (QURAN, 2:52). In every generation [God] has entrusted the defense of His Religion, His *Sharīʿa*, His Book, and the hadiths of His Messenger to trustworthy *imāms*, who have researched, recorded, elucidated, and transmitted reports from the bearer of the Message (may God's blessings and peace be upon him and his family), from his Companions, their Followers, and the *imams* of the Muslims, thereby bringing to naught the fraud and distortion of the extremists and mischief-makers. They studied and researched grammar and the facts of the *Sharīʿa*. They examined the Prophetic hadiths meticulously, and sifted them with the utmost care. Their sciences and their behavior were a lantern of right guidance and a lamp which irradiated the whole Muslim world and illuminated the path of those who sought to acquire knowledge, practice it, and study the Book of God and the Prophetic hadiths. Their knowledge furnished devastating proofs against the claims of the distorters and the misinterpreters.

Muslims should rely on the explanations and clarifications made by these *imāms* regarding their religion, the practice of their *Sharīʿa*, and the understanding of its texts and rulings. Let Muslims beware of deviant innovators and the false interpretations they propagate among the common people, for they represent nothing but sedition and error.

A further kind of deviation is that committed by certain recent commentators on the Quran, who have imagined themselves to be possessed of knowledge which would allow them to comment on the Quran in a novel way unknown to the commentators of old.

They gave themselves the title of "Renewers" and proceeded to interpret the prostration of the sun as its "rotation," the angels and jinn as "forces," the "birds in flocks" [*ababīl*][87] as "smallpox," and so forth. Their argument was that since they had not observed in the visible world the sun prostrating, the existence of angels or jinn, nor these birds, they were obliged to ignore the evident meaning of the words and interpret them as references to these claims that their minds could accommodate. They were oblivious to the fact that because something is inaccessible to the senses does not mean that it does not exist. Many things in existence are invisible to the eye and can only be perceived through their effects, such as the spirits, electricity, various forms of energy, and other things which lie behind matter. They were similarly oblivious of the statements of the leading commentators about certain Quranic verses, such as *The stars and the trees prostrate* (QURAN, 55:6); *To God prostrates everything that is in the heavens, and what walks the earth, and the angels; and they are not arrogant* (QURAN, 16:49); and *To God prostrate those who are in the heavens and earth, willingly or unwillingly, as do their shadows, in the morning and the evening hours* (QURAN, 13:15). One may also add to these the verses that deal with the world of the angels and that of the jinn, and what the commentators have said about the reality of angels and jinn, the exchanges of words between the angels and their Lord, between the Prophet ﷺ and the jinn, between the jinn themselves, and about the birds in flocks mentioned in the Surat al-Fīl (105). There is enough there to heal such sicknesses, satisfy one's interest, and put a final end to such difficulties. These people deny the very existence of angels and jinn in the world, and this is the precursor to explicit disbelief.

CHAPTER 29

Warning Against Casually Accusing Someone of Disbelief

Know that the duty of enjoining good and forbidding evil must be carried out with wisdom and goodly exhortation. Should it be necessary to enter into a debate with someone, this must be done in the best way possible. God the Exalted has said, *Summon to the way of your Lord with wisdom and goodly exhortation, and debate with them in the best of ways* (QURAN, 16:125). This is more likely to lead to acceptance and success; to do otherwise would be erroneous and foolish. When you see a Muslim who prays, fulfills his obligations to God, avoids what He has forbidden, spreads His message, and builds His mosques and schools, and you wish to invite him to something which you believe to be right, but find that he thinks differently, and that this particular matter has long been controversial among the scholars, some of whom affirm its validity while others deny it, and he refuses to follow your advice, if you then accuse him of disbelief just because his opinion is different from yours, you are guilty of a monstrous crime and a grave deviation which God has forbidden, for He has commanded you to have recourse to wisdom and goodness.

It is the consensus [*ijmaʿ*] of the Nation that it is forbidden to

accuse anyone of disbelief who recognizes the *Qibla*, unless he denies [God] the Able Maker (Majestic and Exalted is He!), commits blatant idolatry not open to interpretation, denies Prophecy, rejects whatever else is known to be an indispensable part of religion, or something which has been handed down by many chains of transmission [*tawatur*] or indispensable knowledge[A] that has been confirmed by the consensus of the Nation.

Anyone who rejects something which is known to be an indispensable part of religion, such as *Tawḥīd*, Prophecy, Muḥammad's status as "Seal of the Messengers" ﷺ, the Resurrection on the Last Day, the Judgment, reward and punishment, or the Garden and the Fire, is a disbeliever. No Muslim may claim ignorance as his excuse for this, unless he has only recently entered Islam, in which case he is excusable until he learns about them.

Tawatur is the transmission of information by a large number of people reliably known to be incapable of conspiring together to perpetrate a lie, who in turn have handed it down to a group similar to themselves. This can be in relation to the chain of transmission [*isnad*], as, for example, in the case of the hadith in which [the Prophet] says, "Whoever lies about me deliberately, let him prepare to assume his place in the Fire."[88] Alternatively, [the transmission] can be in relation to a whole generation, as with the transmission of the Quran, which was passed on by whole generations who learned, memorized, recited, and taught it all over the earth from east to west, so that everyone received it from everyone else; it therefore stood in no need of chain of transmission. It can also be the mass transmission of an action, such as those of the actions known in the Prophetic era which have come down to us. Or it can take the

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[A] Indispensable knowledge (*ma lum bi'l-darura*) in Islam is knowledge of those beliefs and practices that are so widely known to be essential to religion that anyone who denies them or denies part of them is considered to have abandoned an essential part of Islam, and is thus considered a disbeliever. — *Translator.*

form of the transmission of information such as the miracles, the individual instances of which were transmitted by single chains, but the ensemble of which came down through *tawātur,* so that they constitute certain knowledge for every Muslim.

Judging a Muslim to be a disbeliever in circumstances other than those detailed above is a dangerous matter. There is a hadith that states, "If a man calls his brother a disbeliever then one of them will have deserved the description."[89] Such a judgment should only be made by one who, by the light of the *Sharī'a,* is capable of discerning the ins and outs of disbelief and perceive clearly the boundaries established by the *Sharī'a* that separate faith from disbelief. It is not permissible for anyone to charge into this area and declare people to be outside Islam merely on the basis of one's own imagination and conjectures, without seeking firm proofs and certainty, and in the absence of firmly established knowledge. Otherwise, great confusion would ensue, and very few Muslims would be left on the face of the earth.

Neither is it allowable to accuse sinners of disbelief, as long as they have faith and affirm the Two Testimonies. In a hadith, Anas (may God be pleased with him) related that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Three things are part of the root of faith: [first] to refrain from harming all who say *Lā ilāha illa'llāh,* not to accuse them of disbelief because of a sin, and not to expel them from Islam because of their actions. [Second], *jihād* continues, from the day God sent me until the time when the last of my nation shall fight the *Dajjāl;*[90] it shall not be abolished by the tyranny of tyrants or the justice of the just. [Third] belief in destiny."[91]

Imām al-Ḥaramayn al-Juwaynī used to say, "Should we be requested to define which expressions should be judged to be disbelief and which should not, we would say that this was an unattainable wish, for it is a remote goal reached by a difficult road, derived from the very fundamentals of *Tawḥīd;* and whoever has

not completely understood the furthest limits of realities will be unable to find the proofs necessary to pronounce a sound verdict of disbelief."

For this reason we warn people against casually accusing people of disbelief under any circumstances other than those outlined above, for this matter is extremely serious.

And God guides to the even path; and unto Him is the journeying.

CHAPTER 30

The Inviolability and Rank of a Muslim

Know that of all the ties that may exist between Muslims, Islam itself is the strongest. It forms a bond between the easterner and the westerner, between the black and the white. The bond of Islam gathers them, and, through its brotherhood, relationships between widely different groups are harmonized. Through it they become as one body, such that when one part is sick the other parts suffer with it in restlessness and fever; and like a building, each part supports the rest. They are equal regardless of their lineages; the lowest among them can speak on their behalf, and they are united as one hand against all others. They are concerned about one another irrespective of distance, and each rejoices when good fortune befalls his brethren, and is saddened when they are afflicted by hardship and difficulties. Each prays to God for his brothers in their absence, in gatherings and on the pulpits. Each prays that God check those who threaten Islam, whether they be the aggressors, the immoral, the workers of corruption, or the disbelievers. For the Muslim, Islam is his finest banner, in which he takes pride and by which he is ennobled in every situation, so that he becomes angered when it is slandered or attacked. He sacrifices his own life and what is

dearest to him in its defense, for it is his most precious jewel, and the greatest of the gifts bestowed upon him by God. As it is said:

Ease and plenty are our lot
Rapture and repose;
Islam is the highest grace
Ever to bless a people's place.

Islam, represented by the Two Testimonies [*La ilāha illa'llāh Muhammadun rasulu'llah*], renders a Muslim's life and wealth inviolable, protects his rights and boundaries, validates his contracts and pledges, and renders blessed both his present state and his final end.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon Muslims to unite in harmony, to help each other, and stand shoulder to shoulder against the adversaries of Islam and those who conspire against it and seek to bring harm to its people. It is their duty to sacrifice their lives and their wealth to make the Word of God prevail, and to bring power and honor to Islam and Muslims everywhere.[A]

[A] Muslims pray that God guide wrongdoers and disbelievers to the straight path; there is no better outcome than that such people become believers and live together in peace and in harmony. Muslims also pray that God protect Islam and Muslims from evildoers from within and without. Only when things deteriorate to armed conflict do they pray that God vanquish their enemies. — *Translator*.

CHAPTER 31

"To Insult a Muslim Is Corruption, To Wage War on Him Is Disbelief"[2]

Because of what we have just said, it is forbidden to harbor hatred for Muslims or to repudiate or boycott them. To insult them is corruption, and to wage war on them—with the claim that it is lawful to do so—is disbelief. A sufficient deterrent from such things is provided in the story of Khālid ibn al-Walīd (may God be pleased with him) and of his expedition to call the tribe of Banu Judhayma to Islam. When he reached them and asked them to become Muslims, they said, "We are Muslims already." He told them to lay down their arms and dismount, but they said, "No, by God! All that could happen to us after laying down our arms is that we would be killed, for we do not trust you and those who are with you." "There will be no safety for you," Khālid told them, "until you dismount." At this, some of them dismounted, while the rest dispersed. According to another version of the same story, when Khālid reached them he asked them, "What are you?" meaning, "Are you Muslims or disbelievers?" They replied, "We are Muslims. We perform the Prayer and believe in Muhammad ﷺ, we have built mosques in our territory and deliver the Call to

Prayer in them."

It has also been said that instead of saying, "We have become Muslims," they said, incorrectly, "We have recanted [*saba'nā*], we have recanted!" And he asked them, "Why then are you carrying arms?" and they replied, "There is enmity between us and another tribe; we were afraid that you might be from it, and that is why we brought our weapons." Lay them down," he said, and they did. He then said, "Surrender yourselves as prisoners!" and ordered them to tie each other up. He then allocated them to his companions. At dawn his crier proclaimed, "Whoever has a prisoner, let him slay him." The Banū Sulaym killed their captives, but the Emigrants and the Helpers (may God be pleased with them) refused to do so, and released theirs. When news of this reached the Prophet ﷺ, he exclaimed twice, "O God, I declare myself innocent of what Khālid has done!"[93] It might be argued that Khālid had interpreted their words as arrogance and a refusal to surrender, and that the Prophet ﷺ blamed him only for his hastiness and his failure to make certain of what they were, and what they meant by the word "recanted." For [the Prophet] ﷺ had said, "Excellent is the servant of God, the brother kinsman, Khalid ibn al-Walīd, who is one of the swords of God, drawn by Him against the disbelievers and the hypocrites."[94]

A similar story is that of our master Usāma ibn Zayd, the "favorite" [*hibb*] and "son of the favorite" of the Messenger of God. Bukhārī relates that Abū Zubyān said, "I once heard Usama ibn Zayd say, 'The Messenger of God ﷺ sent us against the tribe of al-Haraqat. We came upon its people in the morning and defeated them. I and a man of the Ansar pursued one of them, who said, when we had caught up with him, *"Lā ilāha illa'llāh."* The Ansārī let him go, but I stabbed him with my spear until he perished. On our return, this was related to the Prophet ﷺ, who said, "Usāma! Did you kill him after he had said *'Lā ilāha illa'llāh'*?" I said, "He

did so only to save his life!" but the Prophet kept repeating what he had said until I wished that I had not become a Muslim until that day!'"[95] And in another version of the same story, the Messenger of God ﷺ asked, "Did you split open his heart to see whether he was telling the truth or not?" Usāma then said, "Never again shall I fight someone who testifies *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*."[96]

'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (may God be pleased with him) was once asked whether the sectarian groups who disagreed with him were disbelievers. "No," he replied. "They have fled from disbelief." He was then asked, "So are they hypocrites?" And he replied, "No. Hypocrites remember God only a little, and these remember Him abundantly." "So what are they?" he was asked. And he said, "They are people afflicted by a sedition [*fitna*], so that they have become blind and deaf."

One of the gnostic *imām*s has rightly said about the criterion of the believer:

> All attributes, praiseworthy and blameworthy, exist in the nature of every human being. However, praiseworthy qualities are attributed unconditionally to the believer, while blameworthy ones are attributed to him conditionally. If, for instance, a believer is described as being possessed of faith, then this refers to faith in God and His Messenger. If thankfulness is attributed to him, it will be thankfulness to God, and this is the case with all the other praiseworthy traits. If blameworthy things are attributed to him, they must be qualified. If you say, for example, that he is a disbeliever, then this means that he disbelieves in idols and those who lead to error. If you say that he is avaricious, it means that he guards his religion carefully, and so on.
>
> A disbeliever, on the other hand, is quite the opposite. When applied to him, praiseworthy attributes must be qualified, while it is the blameworthy ones that are unconditional. If you say he is a disbeliever, then this means that he disbelieves in God the Exalted. If you say that he is avaricious, it means he does not give what God

has made obligatory to him to give. If you say, however, that he is a believer, this must be qualified by adding that he believes in idols and those who lead to error. And if you say that he does good, then this only means that he is doing good to the Devil and so on.

CHAPTER 32

God's Analogy of the Word of Tawḥīd *and that of Disbelief*

God says (Exalted is His Glory!): *Have you not seen how God put forth the analogy of a good word as a good tree, the root of which is firm, and the branches of which reach into heaven? It yields its produce every while by permission of its Lord. God puts forth analogies to people that they might remember. And the analogy of a foul word is that of a foul tree, uprooted from the face of the earth, possessing no stability. God sets firm those who believe with the firm utterance in this world and in the Hereafter. God sends the unjust astray; and God does what He will* (QURAN, 14:24-7).

The purpose of an analogy is to bring out the resemblance which exists between an invisible and a visible thing, between an absent and a present thing, or between the intelligible and the concrete. In this way, a truth may be grasped, for when one's perceptions correspond to one's understanding, the utmost clarity ensues. Analogies used when addressing and guiding people have a potent impact on their minds and hearts, which is why people find them appealing and use them extensively in conversation. Surely you can see that if one encourages people to have faith and to profess *Tawḥīd,* but without making use of analogies, the effect of one's words on

their hearts will not be as profound as when one compared these things with *light* or a *goodly tree*? Similarly, an attempt to render disbelief abhorrent to one's audience by speaking of its ugliness will have a far stronger impact on their minds if it is likened to *darkness* or to a *foul tree*. Because of this, God uses a *good tree* possessed of delicious fruits and beautiful leaves as a symbol for the "word of *Tawḥīd* and Faith"—the branching of deeds from it, the pouring forth of lights and gnosis—its blessings and the way it grows.

Its *root* on which it arises is firm, since it penetrates the soil and ramifies therein; storms do not shake it, neither can its trunk be bent. Its *branches*, that is, its upper parts, *reach into heaven*, ascending up into the air, growing, living, and bringing forth blossoms. Moreover, it *yields its produce every while:* it constantly produces a beautiful mature crop, *by permission of its Lord*, and by His excellent decree and disposition. In some hadiths it is said that the palm tree is the *tree* alluded to, as it fulfills the description necessary for the image. Thus, in the heart of the believer, the word of *Tawḥīd* and faith is goodly both in form and in meaning, for it expresses the nobility of *Tawḥīd* and creates in the heart certainty which illuminates its every part, thereby making it goodly in its corporeal as well as incorporeal faculties. Its *root*, on which it arises, is knowledge of God (Exalted and Majestic is He!) and ascribing oneness and worship to Him alone. This root is *firm* in the depths of the heart, by the soundness of its expression and the strength of its proof; and its radiant light reaches the depths of certainty and of secure contentment. Its flowering *branches* reach up to heaven, to exaltation and proximity. This tree of faith *yields its produce* and crop which nourish the spirit and the body, *every while*, that is, again and again, and its fruits are varied, *by permission of its Lord* and His good nurturing, in the form of good works, good traits of character, and useful knowledge. A believer's good works will continue to be raised up and accepted, day and night, and draw

their due profit from his Lord, as long as the tree of his faith is verdant and its branches covered in leaves. Only a hardened loser[a] loses in his dealings with God.

God the Exalted has said of the phrase of disbelief and idolatry: *the analogy of a foul word*—foul in its form and in its false, spurious meaning—is *that of a foul tree, uprooted,* meaning that it resembles it in its form and in the fruit which it yields (some have said that the reference is to the colocynth), the roots of which have been torn out *from the face of the earth,* for they had not been firmly implanted, nor had its branches put forth leaf; instead it drifts over the soil, having no attachment. This is how disbelief is: it has neither root nor branch, for it is built on forgery, falsehood, and idolatry, which have no basis in reality. How can any association of partners with God be real when everything in existence is the work of the One, the Invincible?

The foulness of disbelief and idolatry permeates the disbeliever's outward and inward, so that he thereby becomes unclean. God the Exalted has said, *The idolaters are unclean* (QURAN, 9:28), which means that they possess the uncleanliness which inheres in the filth of disbelief, as well as the fact that they never perform ablution [*wuḍū'*] or the ritual bath [*ghusl*] after sexual intercourse, nor do they avoid impure things. Impurity, therefore, is their state at all times. Ibn ʿAbbās has said, "They are rendered physically unclean by disbelief." God the Exalted is pure, and accepts only what is pure. Thus, the words and deeds of disbelievers are not acceptable to Him, and on the Day of Arising they shall become like scattered dust. As God the Exalted has said regarding the punishment that

[a] Only a hardened loser who persistently refuses all the graces and help extended to him by God—only such a person loses in the end. For none can lose who accepts even a few of the innumerable mercies offered to him by his Generous Lord. God has made it so easy for believers to enter Paradise and has opened so many avenues to success that only the most obtuse can fail to make use of some of them. — *Translator.*

will be meted out to the disbelievers: *We shall turn to the deeds they had done, and render them scattered dust* (QURAN, 25:23). And [God] has said (Exalted is He), *God sets firm those who believe with the firm utterance*, referring to the phrase of *Tawḥīd, in this world,* before death, by guiding them and helping them towards goodly words and deeds, *and in the Hereafter*, in the grave. The Prophet ﷺ has said, "When a believer is interrogated in his grave, he will testify *Lā ilāha illa'llāh Muḥammadun Rasūlu'llāh*, this being the meaning of His words (Exalted is He!), *God sets firm those who believe with the firm utterance.*"

God sends the unjust astray: He will not guide the idolaters to the right answer when they are interrogated in the grave. *And God does what He will:* He gives success and failure, steadfastness and faintness, for He knows who deserves them. None can withhold what He wishes to give, none can reverse what He has decreed; *He will not be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned* (QURAN, 21:23).

One of the prayers of the Prophet ﷺ was, "O Affirmer of Hearts, make firm my heart upon Your religion!"[9]

CHAPTER 33

Contemplation [Shuhud]

To contemplate is to be present and to observe. In the terminology of the Sufis, it signifies a special inner vision effected by the faculty of spiritual insight [*basīra*] and a non-physical proximity, coupled with the knowledge of certainty [*ilm al-yaqīn*] and the truth of certainty [*haqq al-yaqīn*]. The one whom God protects from the veil of distance and distraction, and who draws near to Him by the *ihsān* [excellence in worship] mentioned in the hadith of "to worship God as though you beheld Him,"[98] has entered into the Presence of Witnessing [*Hadrat al-Shuhūd*], penetrated under its spreading shade, tasted the savor of faith with the "faculty of intuitive perception," and entered the Garden of Immediate Gnosis [inwardly in this life] before entering the Garden of Utter Contentment [outwardly in the Hereafter]. *For him who fears the standing before his Lord shall be two gardens* (QURAN, 55:46).

The veil in the servant is removed when he adorns himself with praiseworthy attributes and divests himself of their dense opposites. He then attains to the contemplation of the beauty of the Real within the beauties of His Names and Attributes, and the marvels of His fashioning and of His creatures, and he finds

serenity in His Remembrance [*Dhikr*] and in rendering thanks to Him, delight in obeying and communing with Him, and joy in the direct knowledge of Him. One of the people of Contemplation has said:

> Whoever knows God beholds Him in all things, so that there is nothing he is estranged from. All things find intimate solace in him and he finds such solace in all things. He contemplates with his own eyes the meaning of His words (Exalted is He!), *Everything perishes save His Face* (QURAN, 28:88), and understands the meaning of the Prophet's statement ﷺ, "The truest thing that Labīd ever said was, 'Everything except God is vain.'"" And there dawns upon his heart a ray of the light from His statement (Exalted is He!), *Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God* (QURAN, 2:115), and all confusion is swept away concerning the meaning of, *And We are nearer to him than his jugular vein* (QURAN, 50:16). Whatever he utters is truth, because the Truth will then be his hearing, his sight, and his tongue.

Let us stop at this point in our treatise. For we have now come up to the lowest limits of the meanings of contemplation, which is an exalted station attained by a difficult ascent that is too hard for the likes of us and too difficult for us to understand. As my master Imām ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād (may God have mercy on him and grant us his benefit!) has said:

> Make glad your heart with tidings of a generous share
> Of nearness to your Lord, whose grace is vast.
> The One, the King, the Formidable; to Him hold fast,
> And quaff *Tawḥīd's* pure chalice that is there.
> And contemplate a beauty luminous with light,
> Which shines upon all things, unveiled to human sight.

My master al-Ḥabīb al-Imām ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥabashī (may God have mercy on him and grant us his benefit!) said:

> Roam around these tents for evermore,
> Drink the cups that hold the wine of love;
> Cast off all others, have courtesy,
> When at this station, beyond which there is none.

In Contemplation's Presence there's a wine
Which strips all lovers of the joy of sleep.
In Contemplation's Presence there's a wine
Which leads to thirsty passion's ocean deep.

CHAPTER 34

Reflection [Fikr]

Reflection is the kohl of the inner eye. Sarī al-Saqaṭī once said that [reflection] is better than a year's worship. It is simply to strike your tent and pitch it in the Garden. I have therefore thought it appropriate to take some of its lights to illuminate the path for the one seeking realization. These I set out below.

Reflection is the roaming of the heart in the meanings of things in order to reach its goal. It is with reflection that one dives for the pearls of higher realities [*ḥaqīqa*]. If one's reflection is free from flaws, it will attain to the sources of Realization [*Taḥqīq*]. It is said that it is the "lamp of the heart, which renders visible the good and evil which it contains, and what may benefit it or bring it harm." This is because a heart devoid of reflection is as devoid of light as a dark house, and a heart devoid of light will contain nothing but ignorance, pride, and beguilement.

Ibn ʿAbbās and Abu'l-Dardā' (may God be pleased with them) said, "An hour's reflection is better than a whole night spent in worship."

Al-Ḥasan ibn Abī'l-Ḥasan said, "Reflection is the mirror of the believer, in which he looks at his works, evil and good."

Ibn ʿAtīyya wrote in his commentary on the Quran that his father had been told the following story by one of the scholars of the eastern regions:

> I once spent the night in a mosque in Egypt. After I had said the Night Prayer, I noticed a man lying down wrapped in his mantle. We remained awake, however, and prayed through the night. When the *adhan* was given for the Morning Prayer, the man stood up and [immediately] prayed with the others. I was disgusted by his audacity to pray without ritual ablution. So when the Prayer was finished and the man departed, I went after him to admonish him. But when I drew near to him, I overheard him saying:
>
> A body full up, both absent and present
> A heart that's alert, silent in *dhikr;*
> Constricted to others, expanded within
> thus is the state of gnosis and *fikr.*
> Spending his nights in reflection
> ever asleep, and always awake.
>
> So I left him alone, thinking, "He must be one of those who worship God through reflection."[45]

CHAPTER 35

Kinds of Reflection

There are several kinds of reflection. Ascetics reflect on the evanescent nature of this world, and the way in which it betrays those who pursue it. This gives them patience, which causes their detachment to grow.

Worshippers reflect on the beautiful reward which is in store for them, so that their ardor and enthusiasm for it wax stronger.

Gnostics reflect on the favors and blessed gifts of God and on the secrets of the Names and Attributes. In this way they increase in love for their Exalted and Majestic Creator.

Ordinary people reflect on the proofs and evidences which lead to faith.

Exalted, then, is the state of he who does all four!

Once it is made easy for one, reflection is one of the noblest acts of worship, for it implies the Remembrance of God and brings about an increase in attachment and love. For the heart loves only the one whom it believes has greatness, and the greatness of God the Exalted is only revealed through knowledge of His Attributes, Ability, and the marvels of His works. In this way, reflection leads to knowledge, which in turn leads to reverence, which leads on to love.

Imam al-Ghazalī (may God sanctify his secret!) has said, "A man who reflects at length in order to know God, and has had unveiled to him even the minutest portion of the secrets of His Kingdom, will find in his heart such joy and bliss in this unveiling that he will almost fly, and he will be amazed at his own steadfastness and firmness."

Our master, the Pole of Guidance, al-Ḥabīb ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād has said in his *Book of Assistance*:

> You should have a *wird* of reflection in every twenty-four hours, for which you should set aside one or more hours. The best time for reflection is the one which contains the fewest preoccupations and worries, and the most potential for the heart to be present, such as the depths of the night. Know that the state of one's religious and worldly affairs depends upon the soundness of one's reflection. Anyone who has a share of it has an abundant share of everything good. It has been said, "An hour's reflection is better than a year worship." ʿAlī [ibn Abī Ṭālib], may God honor his face, has said, "There is no worship like reflection." And one of the gnostics said, "Reflection is the lamp of the heart; if it departs the heart will have no light."
>
> The ways of reflection are many. One, which is the most noble of them, is to reflect on the wonders of God's dazzling creation, the inward and outward signs of His Ability, and the signs He has scattered abroad in the realm of the earth and the heavens. This kind of reflection increases your knowledge of the Essence, Attributes and Names of God. He has encouraged it by saying, *Say: Look at what is in the heavens and the earth!* (QURAN, 10:10). You yourself are one of the wondrous creatures He has made, and you should therefore reflect on yourself, for He has said, *In the earth are signs for those who have certainty, and in yourselves; can you not see?* (QURAN, 51:20-21).
>
> Know that you must reflect on the favors of God and His bounties which He caused to reach you. He has said, *Remember the favors of God, so that you may succeed* (QURAN, 7:69); *Should you*

[attempt to] *number the favors of God, you will not be able to do so* (QURAN, 45:18); and *All good things that you possess are from God* (QURAN, 46:53). This kind of reflection results in the heart filling with the love of God and continuously rendering thanks to Him, inwardly and outwardly, in a manner that pleases and satisfies Him.

Know that you should reflect on God's complete awareness of you, and His seeing and knowing all about you: *We have created man, and We know what his soul whispers to him; and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein* (QURAN, 50:16); *He is with you wherever you may be, and God sees what you do* (QURAN, 57:14); and *Have you not seen that God knows what is in the heavens and the earth, and no three persons converse but that He is their fourth, and no five persons but that He is their sixth?* (QURAN, 58:7). This kind of reflection results in your feeling ashamed before God should He see you where He has forbidden you to be or miss you where He has commanded you to be.

Know that you must reflect on your shortcomings in worshipping your Lord and your exposing yourself to His wrath should you do what He has forbidden you. He has said, *I created jinn and men only to worship Me* (QURAN, 51:56); *Do you think that We created you in vain and that to Us you will not be returned?* (QURAN, 23:115); *O mankind! What is it that has deceived you concerning your Generous Lord?* (QURAN, 82:16); and *O mankind! You shall surely toil toward your Lord laboriously and you shall meet Him* (QURAN, 84:16). This kind of reflection increases your fear of God, encourages you to blame and reproach yourself, to avoid remissness, and persevere in your zeal.

Know that you must reflect on this worldly life, its numerous preoccupations and hazards, and the swiftness with which it perishes, and reflect on the Afterlife and its felicity and permanence. God the Exalted has said, *Thus does God render the signs clear to you, so that you may reflect on this world and the Afterlife* (QURAN, 2:220); *But you prefer the life of the world, when the Afterlife is better and more abiding* (QURAN, 77:17); and *The life of the world is but*

distraction and play; while the Last Abode is indeed the Life, if they but knew (QURAN, 29:64). This kind of reflection results in losing all desire for the world and in wishing for the Afterlife.

Know that you should reflect on the imminence of death and the regret and remorse which occur when it is too late. God has said: *Say: the death that you flee from will indeed meet you, and you will then be returned to the Knower of the unseen and the seen, and He will inform you of that which you had been doing* (QURAN, 62:8); *Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, "My Lord! Send me back, that I may do good in that which I have left!" No! It is but a word he says* (QURAN, 23:99); and *O believers! Let not your wealth or your children distract you from the Remembrance of God . . . . And God will not reprieve a soul whose time has come* (QURAN, 63: 9-11). The benefit of this kind of reflection is that hopes become short, behavior finer, and provision is gathered for the Appointed Day.

Know that you should reflect on those attributes and acts by which God has described His Friends and His enemies, and on the immediate and delayed recompense which He has prepared for each group. He has said, *The righteous are in felicity, and the depraved are in Hell* (QURAN, 82:13-14); *Is the one who is a believer like the one who is corrupt? They are not equal* (QURAN, 32:181); and *As for the one who gave [in charity], was God-fearing, and believed in goodness, We shall ease him into ease* (QURAN, 92:5-7) up to the end of the sura; *The believers are those whose hearts tremble when God is mentioned, and whose faith grows when His verses are recited to them, and who rely on their Lord. Those who establish the Prayer and spend from what We have bestowed upon them—such are the true believers; they will have rank with their Lord, and forgiveness and a generous provision* (QURAN, 8:2-4); *God has promised those amongst you who have believed and done good works that He will make them rulers over the earth as He made those who were before them rulers* (QURAN, 24:55); *Each We took for their sin; on some of them We sent a hurricane, some were taken by the Cry, some We caused the earth to swallow, and some We drowned. It was not for God to wrong them, but they wronged themselves* (QURAN, 39:40);

Hypocrite men and hypocrite women proceed from one another; they enjoin evil and forbid good and withhold their hands. They have forgotten God, so He forgot them. Truly, the hypocrites are the corrupt. God has promised hypocrite men and hypocrite women and the disbelievers the fire of Hell, in which they shall abide perpetually, which shall be enough for them. God curses them, and theirs is a lasting torment (QURAN, 9:67-68); *Believing men and believing women are allies to each other; they enjoin good and forbid what is evil, and establish the Prayer and give the Zakat, and obey God and His Messenger. God shall show them His mercy; indeed, God is August, Wise. God has promised the believers, men and women, gardens beneath which rivers flow, in which they shall abide perpetually, and beautiful dwellings in Gardens of Eden, and the good-pleasure of God, which is greater. That is the supreme triumph* (QURAN, 9:71-7); *Those who do not expect to meet Us are content with the life of the world and feel secure therein, and are heedless of Our signs; their place of refuge is Hell, because of what they have acquired. Those who believe and do good works shall be guided by their Lord because of their faith. Rivers shall flow beneath them in gardens of joy. Their prayer therein shall be "Transcendent are You, O our God!" and their greeting therein shall be "Peace!" And their last prayer is, "Praise is for God, the Lord of the Worlds!* (QURAN, 10:7-10).

The result of this kind of reflection is that you come to love the fortunate,[100] habituate yourself to emulating their behavior and to taking on their qualities.

Were we to allow ourselves to pursue the various channels of reflection we would have to forgo the brevity which we had intended to maintain. What we have mentioned should suffice the man of reflection.

You should, with each kind of reflection, bring to mind those verses, hadiths, and other narratives which relate to it. We have given an example of this by quoting some of the verses relating to each kind of reflection.

Beware of reflecting on the Essence of God and His attributes in

the wish to understand their nature and how they exist. Rarely has anyone become enamored of this without falling into the abysses of negation [*ta'ṭīl*][101] or the traps of anthropomorphism [*tashbīh*].[102] The Messenger of God ﷺ has said, "Reflect on the favors of God, and do not reflect on His Essence, for you will never be able to give Him His due."[103]

The quotation from this comprehensive and fascinating chapter of *The Book of Assistance* of Imām al-Haddād closes here.[104]

CHAPTER 36

An Example of How to Reflect on the Favors of God

God has created man as a compound of body and spirit. He has made the body in need of nourishment to sustain its life and growth, and He created fine forms of sustenance for it, such as wheat, rice, and corn, which He made preferable to barley, sugarcane, and cattle fodder. Just as He made man superior to every [other creature], He made his food finer than other forms of nourishment. He made the grains, which are your sustenance, at the top end of long stalks, while the stalks themselves are fodder for the animals that He has set at your service. Similarly, He has made wheat grains small and easy to grind. Had He made them as big as eggs or apples, it would have been very difficult to grind them. He made animals subjugated for you to use. *And We have subjected them for them, so that some they ride on and others they eat* (QURAN, 36:72); *And of their wool, fur, and hair [We have provided] furnishing and things to enjoy for a time* (QURAN, 16:80). He gave you to *drink of what is in their bellies, between dung and blood, pure milk palatable to those who drink it* (QURAN, 16:66). He gave [the beasts] no reason, lest they dispute with their masters and refuse to serve them, but He gave them instead sharp faculties, more effective than those given to man.

so that they may perform their functions. Thus is the precision of His fashioning, the perfection of His creation, and the magnitude of His Lordship. In the same way, He gave you fruits, harvests, and flowers blossoming within your reach on their trees, calling you in accordance with their nature, saying: "Take me, eat me, smell my fragrance, for I have been made for you and none other!" *Eat of its fruit when it is ripe* (QURAN, 6:141); *Do you grow it, or are We the grower?* (QURAN, 56:64). Thus, the state of everything in existence which He has made is based on wisdom and excellence. Nothing is devoid of wisdom; nothing is without a lesson. *So blessed is God, the Best of Creators!* (QURAN, 23:14); *Surely in this are signs for people who reflect* (QURAN, 13:3).

CHAPTER 37

The Reminder and Inward Struggle

A believer's reflections may lead him to some of the deep mysteries of *Tawḥīd*, its unseen secrets, and its hidden realities. He may observe how the scholars differ in the interpretation of the verses and hadiths relating to the attributes of God, and he may then halt before them baffled and bewildered, unable to remove the veils and solve these enigmas. At this point—a certain gnostic once said—a person should retreat and seek refuge in his Lord, and consider Him alone to be possessed of knowledge of these things, as was the way of our righteous predecessors. He must reflect on how he had needed his Lord's creative ability to make and fashion his human form and that he must therefore need His grace and illumination to guide his essential nature. He must not ground his faith in the conclusions of human thinking, but must rather flee from his confusion to God and His Messenger, and entreat his Lord to bestow His assistance [*madad*] upon him, which will do away with his need for any other until such time as he witnesses only Him. He must say, "O Lord, I seek refuge in You, lest my faith in You and what You have revealed be the product of rationalization that is tarnished by the attributes of the ego or by a mind that is mixed with the murkiness of human

fallibility. Rather, let it be from Your manifest light, Your most exalted assistance, the light of Your Prophet, the Chosen One, and his blessings." Thus will you find peace and cool tranquility. This is the way the rightly guided man follows in his time of need, whenever his thoughts are in turmoil and conflict. *This is a reminder, so whoever wishes will take a path to his Lord* (QURAN, 76:29), which means the path to His gnosis, good-pleasure, and proximity to Him in His Garden. Such a path consists, inwardly, of strengthening one's faith and certainty through Remembrance and reflection, and, outwardly, by zealously seeking useful knowledge through the senses, performing good actions—which are the Law [*Sharī'a*]—and maintaining sincerity and courtesy, and keeping the company of the people of gnosis (which is the method [*tarīqa*]), so that one may reach the serenity of certitude, which is realization [*ḥaqīqa*]: the summit of the wayfarer's desires.

God the Exalted has said, *We shall guide to Our paths those who strive for Our sake* (QURAN, 29:69). In this noble verse the Generous Lord promises to guide those who strive sincerely for His sake to the paths which lead to His pleasure and proximity. This guidance is the result of striving and of correctly following the *Sunna*. It is the unveiling [*mukāshafa*] of the clear Truth and the appearance of things from the unseen. Before this stage is attained, there are two forms of guidance: through information, as in His saying, *As for Thamūd, We gave them guidance, but they preferred to be blind than to be guided* (QURAN, 41:17); and through providential assistance [*tawfīq*], as in His saying, *God guides to His Light whomever He will* (QURAN, 24:35). My master, Imam al-Ḥaddād has said:

Struggle, and you will see,
Seize the vow of the Guider:
The guidance laid down for free
In the Sura of the Spider.[105]

Inward struggle [*mujāhada*] is an interaction between a man and his ego, which he drives toward that which is of both immediate and ultimate benefit, and results in success and happiness, during which time it resists him and pulls him toward its whims, in accordance with its nature. It is also the interaction between him and his other enemies, the strongest of whom is Satan the repudiate. He has to guard himself against the latter, fight the disbelievers [who aggress], support Islam, rebut the people of falsehood, suppress the unjust, enjoin good, and forbid evil.

A man's ego (the *nafs* which incites to evil) is contained between his flanks and is the fiercest of his enemies. There is a tradition[A] to the effect: "Your worst enemy is your ego which lies between your flanks."[106] Because of this, the *jihād* against the ego is the "*Greater Jihād*," whereas *jihād* against armed enemies is the "Lesser *Jihād*." Another tradition runs, "We have returned from the Lesser to the Greater *Jihād*."[107] Four things are used to assist in taming the ego, so that it submits and becomes easily led; these have been set forth in a single verse by my master al-Ḥaddād:

> Discipline the ego by constant isolation,
> silence, sleeplessness, and hunger.

Someone who eats just enough for his sustenance, sleeps just enough to gain rest, speaks only when appropriate, mixes with people only rarely—for fear of falling into some blameworthy form of conduct—is worthy to hold the reins of his ego, so that he may lead it along the path of the noble ones, which is the way of *Sharī'a*, *Ṭarīqa*, and *Ḥaqīqa*, as is indicated by the noble Quranic verse cited above.

[A] We use "tradition" to mean that which has been handed down, which will include weak Prophetic hadiths, as well as utterances of the Companions and Followers. Used in this manner, it will correspond to the Arabic "*athar*." — *Translator*.

CHAPTER 38

Sharīʿa *and* Haqīqa

One of the best things I have seen written on this subject is what my master Imām Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdallāh al-ʿAydarūs once wrote in response to a question sent to him by a jurist asking about the difference between *Sharīʿa* and *Haqīqa*. His answer was most complete, and I shall quote it here in full. He said, may God be pleased with him:

> In the name of God, the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. Praise is for God; it is He who praises Himself and is the worthy of all praise. He sets the urge to seek in the seeker, and He is the Besought. By His volition, He created a volition in His servant and gave him existence so that He could render him morally accountable for the observation of His commandments and prohibitions, and might reward or punish him in accordance with his endeavors. He told him, *Man has nothing save what he has strived for* (QURAN, 53:39). But on another occasion He affirmed Himself, *You do not will, unless God wills* (QURAN, 76:30). Because the matter is bewildering, so that both the eye of the flesh and that of the heart are blinded, He grants the good fortune of His Hidden Knowledge to whomsoever He wills among His servants, so that their bodies adhere to *Sharīʿa* and their hearts dwell in *Haqīqa*. The knowledge whose manifestations appear upon the body is knowledge of the outward, namely, the

Sharī'a, while the knowledge whose manifestations impinge upon the heart is knowledge of the inward, which is the *Haqīqa*. He has established the outward of Islam on pillars which are performed by the physical faculties, and has established the *Haqīqa* of faith [*īmān*] and excellence [*ihsān*] on the certainty and clarity resulting from the determination of the heart. Thus, since things in the heart are hidden from the physical sense of hearing, He created an interpreter for them, which is language. In this way has the *Sharī'a* been connected to the *Haqīqa*, and the *Haqīqa* to the *Sharī'a*, so that they remained as the poet declares:

The glass is delicate, so is the wine.
It's an enigma; they seem both the same.
It's as though the wine was devoid of a cup,
Or the cup was devoid of the wine.

This is why those among the people of the *Sharī'a* who have acquired its sciences, but stopped short of truly practicing them, have come to say that anything apart from the *Sharī'a* is disbelief. In saying this they are, from one point of view, speaking the truth, and, from another, wholly mistaken. Similarly, those who mouth words about the *Haqīqa*, but have not in fact attained to it, declare that there is nothing apart from the *Haqīqa*. They too, from one point of view, are speaking the truth, and, from another, wholly mistaken.

Those among the people of *Da'wa* who have acquired both [*Sharī'a* and *Haqīqa*] call out to both these people, saying, "Have you not heard the summoner to success, on the middle of the road, crying, *We shall surely guide to Our paths those who strive for Our sake?*" (QURAN, 29:69). The "striving" is the *Sharī'a* and the active response to its injunctions, which will cause one to be led to "His paths," which, in turn, is a reference to the *Haqīqa*. This is why you have not known the *Haqīqa*: it is because you have not practiced the *Sharī'a*.

As for you who mouth words of *Haqīqa*, you will not receive guidance until you strive to observe the injunctions and prohibitions of the *Sharī'a*. It is almost as though you were ignorant of what God has told His servants in the *Fātiha* of His

Book. He first teaches them how to praise and thank Him, and that He is deserving of praise, in view of His Lordship over all the worlds. He uses the word "Lord" because of the utmost kindness and gentleness that it implies. Then He comforts them by telling them that He is to them the *Rahman* [the All-Merciful] in this life and the *Rahīm* [the Compassionate] in the next, and this makes His servants exultant with hope. And in danger of overstepping their limits, He then subdues them by proclaiming that He is *King of the Day of Judgment* (QURAN, 1:3). For the true nature of kingship is justice, and the Day of Judgment is the time of requital. He thus gives them the wings of both fear and hope and shows them how to use them to soar up to His presence, commanding them to say, *It is You that we worship* (QURAN, 1:4)—and this is the *Sharī'a*. When He established them in worship, they imagined that they were possessed of a volition, and were seized with overwhelming pride and ostentation, so He wished to inform them that they could only obey Him by asking for His help: *It is You that we turn to for help* (QURAN, 1:3), which refers to the *Haqīqa*. With this, the servants of God who enjoy this support come to know that although they themselves are possessed of volitions, they originate from God the Exalted to enable them to observe the injunctions and prohibitions of the *Sharī'a*, which is the station of rectitude. [The hadith, "Say, 'God,' then adhere to rectitude"] means that one should be constant in obeying Him, with the knowledge that were it not for His providential guidance first and last, there would have been neither *Haqiqa* nor volition. Thus there is no justification for any pride or ostentation, since His servants are from and by Him. This, which is the secret of the divine Ability, represents the first step on the path of *Haqīqa* to subsistence by Him and extinction regarding oneself. At this point, the servant of God who enjoys God's support must necessarily return to Him, having found no recourse save in His good pleasure and no ladder to Him save calling upon Him, so that one remains bewildered. Then he is told to say: *Guide us to the straight path—the path of those whom You have favored, not those with whom You are wrathful, nor those who are astray!* (QURAN, 1:5-7).

In sum, *Sharī'a* is that you follow God's commands, and this constitutes submission [*islām*] and faith [*īmān*]. *Ḥaqīqa* is that He establish you in this firmly as if you were beholding Him while He beholds you, which constitutes the station of excellence [*iḥsān*]. If you wished, you could say that *Sharī'a* is a science, the content of which is *ṭarīqa*, which is action, and the result of which is to reach God, which is *Ḥaqīqa*. This "reaching" does not result from wayfaring, nor from whether the distance is near or far. Instead, your struggling toward Him is simply by His providence, while His approaching you is from His mercy. This is known to some and unknown to others, and beneath it lies an extensive science and hidden secret. People are living in *jumbled dreams* (QURAN, 12:44). "O God, forgive my people, for they do not know!"

CHAPTER 39

Valuable Books on the Landmarks of Wayfaring [Sulūk]

Gnostic scholars have explained this path and its waymarks in the richness of their books and through their lives. Among their celebrated writings, I shall mention the following: *The Sustenance of Hearts;*[108] *The Revival of the Religious Sciences;*[109] *The Treatise* of al-Qushayrī;[110] *The Gifts of Knowledge;*[111] *The Book of Renunciation and Words that Soften the Heart* of Ibn al-Mubārak;[112] *The Description* of Abū Nu'aym;[113] *The Meadows of the Virtuous* of Imām al-Nawawī[114] and his *Garden of the Gnostics;*[115] the chapter on "Words that Soften the Heart" in the *Musnad* of Imām Aḥmad, and in other collections of hadith; *The Book of Courtesy* of al-Bukhārī;[116] *The Proofs of Prophethood* of al-Bayhaqī;[117] the books of Imām al-Sha'rānī,[118] Imām al-Ḥaddād, and all other books of biographies and hagiography, by which people are reformed merely by reading them. May God reward them on behalf of this Nation with the best of rewards!

CHAPTER 40

Allah—Majestic and Exalted Is He

Allah is a proper noun denoting the necessarily existent Essence, the existence of other than whom is ephemeral and originates in Him. No other has ever been given this name, as He has said (Exalted is He!), *Do you know of a namesake for Him?* (QURAN, 19:65). It is the Greatest Name, which signifies the Essence that encompasses the entirety of the divine attributes. All the other Names are explanatory of it and can be traced back to it. They are His attributes and description; the Names may be many but they all signify One, who is God.

All of the Names pervade the universe in the way that the spirit pervades the body. There is no being, whether minute or magnificent, high or low, dense or subtle, scarce or abundant, but that the Names of God envelop it outwardly and inwardly, while the Name of Divinity contains them all. Thus one may say that God is *al-Rahman* [the All-Merciful], and that God is *al-Rahim* [the Compassionate], and that God is *al-Khaliq* [the Creator]: these and all the other Beautiful Names and Mighty Attributes refer to Him.

Islam can only be entered with His Name [*Allah*]; none other is acceptable; and, since it cannot be replaced by any other word,

one cannot say *Lā ilāha illa'l-Ghaffār* [There is no God but the Ever-Forgiving], or *Lā ilāha illa'l-Raḥīm* [There is no God but the Compassionate], or *al-Jabbār* [the Compeller]; one may only say *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*. It is mentioned this way in the Quran and hadith because it is more indicative of the essential nature of the Divine knowledge and is exclusively His, being the best known, most perfect, and most evident of His Names. He has used it to refer to Himself, to make Himself known to His creation, and has commanded mankind to use it when praying to Him.

The suffix "*umma*" [as in *Allāhumma*] is sometimes used instead of the vocative particle, so that one may say, *Allāhumma*, meaning *Yā Allāh!* This is used in addressing oneself to Him in prayer and supplication. One very seldom says *Yā Allāhumma*, although an Arab poet has said:

> When suffering occurs I say
> *Allāhumma, Yā Allāhumma!*

In Arabic, the letter *mīm* denotes comprehensiveness. It means that the word it is added to includes all Names and Attributes. For this reason it is related that al-Ḥasan al-Basrī said, "*Allāhumma* is the comprehensive prayer." And al-Nadr ibn Shumayl said, "Whoever says *Allāhumma* has prayed to God with all His Names." Adding the *mīm* to the vocative form of the word *Allāh* implies that one is concentrated and determined in one's supplication.

CHAPTER 41

Remembrance of God the Exalted

People of sound intellect know that this world is a place of constant change and a road that leads to the Abode of the Afterlife. This is why it is called *dunyā*: short-lived, swiftly evanescent. Its first stage is the cradle, its last the grave. The destination is either the Garden or the Fire. A lifetime, therefore, is a distance to be covered, of which the years are its stages. Time and days are a man's capital, while his inclinations, his desires, and his various ambitions are the highway robbers. His success is to meet with God and attain everlasting happiness. He loses by being veiled from God and being consigned to the painful torment of Hell.

For this reason the intelligent believer transforms all his breaths into acts of obedience and fills them only with the Remembrance [*dhikr*] of God. The man who is guilty of heedlessness, even if only for the space of a single breath in his entire lifetime, exposes himself to endless remorse and irreparable ruin. That is why "The single-hearted are the foremost," as the Prophet has said ﷺ. He was then asked, "O Messenger of God, who are the single-hearted?" He replied, "*The men and women who remember God abundantly*" (QURAN, 33:35).[19] They are those who forsake the company of

people in order to remember God, so that they single themselves out from among all creatures, as well as their companions, to commit themselves to God (August and Majestic is He), and to devote themselves to Him in worship, in the way that He desires and as He had commanded His Messenger and his followers to act, in His statement: *Thus mention the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him* (QURAN, 73:8). In this way did He point out that continuous Remembrance is best accomplished by excellence in devotion and committing oneself solely to Him. God (Exalted is He!) has also said, *Those who believe and whose hearts find tranquility in the Remembrance of God—indeed, it is in the Remembrance of God that hearts find tranquility* (QURAN, 13:28). In other words, "[One finds] serenity and contentment." Serenity arises from certainty, just as restlessness comes from doubt. The Remembrance of God brings tranquility to the hearts of believers and allows certainty to dwell therein.

Remembrance is to feel the presence of the One Remembered in one's heart and to free oneself from distraction and forgetfulness. This is accomplished by maintaining the heart in a state of constant attentiveness, articulating the Remembrance with the tongue and forsaking the fold of unawareness for the wide space of Witnessing.

Remembrance is the companion and spirit of actions. See how God pairs it with ritual Prayer, which is the best of all acts of worship, and makes Remembrance the very reason for it, when He says, *Establish the Prayer for My Remembrance* (QURAN, 20:14). Imam al-Haddād says in one of his poems:

Remember your God with a Remembrance you never leave,
For Remembrance is like a sovereign for devotions.

Remembrance is the cornerstone of the Path, the key to realization, the weapon of the seeker, and the authentication of sainthood. God says (Exalted is He!), *Remember Me, and I shall*

remember you (QURAN, 2:152). And the Prophet ﷺ said, "God the Exalted says, 'I am as My servant thinks Me to be, and I am with him when he remembers Me. When he remembers Me within himself, I remember him within Myself. When he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in a better assembly.'"[120] Another tradition says, "I am the companion of the one who remembers Me"[121]—and what must you think of someone whose companion is God Himself! This is a special attribute of Remembrance: attending at the Exalted Presence and attainment to the rank of proximity, which is expressed by "being with" and "companionship."

Remembrance is the greatest station for worshippers, where they take their traveling provisions, make bargains, and to which they constantly return. God has assigned times and numbers to all forms of worship except Remembrance, with regard to which He simply commanded us to do it abundantly, without setting any limits. He has said, *O believers! Remember God abundantly!* (QURAN, 33:41), meaning that it should be done in all circumstances, night and day, on land and sea, in sickness and in health, at home or when traveling, silently and aloud. He has allowed no excuses for forsaking it, except for those whose faculty of reason has departed. There is a hadith recorded by Bukhārī and Muslim that states that "those who remember their Lord and those who do not are like the living and the dead."[122] A nomad once asked the Messenger of God ﷺ, "Which action is best?" and he replied, "To leave this life with your tongue still moist from the Remembrance of God."[123]

And the Prophet ﷺ said, "Shall I tell you which action is the best and the purest in the sight of your Lord, is most elevating to your degrees, and which is better for you than giving away gold and silver, and than encountering your enemies so that you strike at their necks and they strike at yours?" "Please do, O Messenger of God!" they said. And he told them, "The Remembrance of God."[124]

And [the Prophet] said ﷺ, "God has angels who roam the streets, searching for the people of Remembrance. When they find people making Remembrance of God (August and Majestic), they call to each other, saying, 'Come to your task!' and they spread their wings around them as high as the terrestrial heaven. Then their Lord asks them—although He has more knowledge than they—'What are My servants saying?' And they reply, 'They are extolling, magnifying, praising, and glorifying You.' 'Have they seen Me?' He asks, and they say, 'No, by God! They have not seen You.' He then says, 'How would it be, then, had they seen Me?' 'Had they seen You,' the angels reply, 'they would have worshipped and glorified You more intensely, and extolled You even more abundantly.' He then says, 'What are they asking for?' and they reply, 'They are asking You for the Garden.' He says, 'Have they seen it?' and they answer, 'No, by God! They have not seen it, O Lord!' 'What if they had seen it?' He asks, and they say, 'Had they seen it they would have been more intent on winning it, more ardent in asking for it, and they would have yearned for it even more intensely.' He then says, 'What are they seeking protection from?' and they reply, 'They seek protection from the Fire.' He says, 'Have they seen it?' and they answer, 'No, by God! They have not seen it.' He says, 'What if they had seen it?' 'Had they seen it,' they reply, 'they would have been even more fearful and more determined to flee from it.' He then says, 'I bring you to witness that I have forgiven them!' One of the angels then says, 'So-and-so is among them, but is not one of them; he merely came to fulfill a need of his.' At this [God] says, 'They have sat together, and whoever sits with them shall never be wretched.'"[125]

This hadith indicates what merit lies in a gathering for Remembrance and in everyone present doing it aloud and in unison, because of the phrases, "They are invoking You" in the plural, and "They are the people who sit," meaning those who assemble for

Remembrance and do it in unison, something which can only be done aloud, since someone whose Remembrance is silent has no need to seek out a session in someone else's company. This is further indicated by the hadith which runs, "I am with him when he remembers Me; when he remembers Me within himself I remember him within Myself, and when he mentions Me in an assembly, I mention him in a better assembly."[126] Thus, silent Remembrance is differentiated from Remembrance said out loud by His saying, "...remembers Me within himself," meaning "silently," and "in a better assembly," meaning "aloud."

Remembrance in a gathering can only be done aloud and in unison. The above Hadith thus constitutes proof that Remembrance done out aloud in a gathering is an exalted kind of Remembrance that is mentioned at the Highest Assembly [*al-Mala' al-A'la*] by our Majestic Lord and the angels who are near to Him, ***who extol Him night and day, and never tire*** (QURAN, 21:20). The affinity is clearly evident between those who are in Remembrance in the transcendent world, who have been created with an inherently obedient and remembering nature, namely, the angels, and those whose Remembrance is made in the dense world, whose natures contain lassitude and distraction, namely, human beings. The reward of the latter for their Remembrance is that they be elevated to a rank similar to that of the Highest Assembly, which is sufficient honor and favor for anyone.

CHAPTER 42

Recitation of the Quran Is Among the Best Forms of Dhikr

Among the best forms of Remembrance and the best of litanies [*awrād*] is engaging in the recitation of the Book of God. The latter is second in merit only to the phrase of *Tawḥīd,* except for those particular invocations which are to be recited at particular times, in which case it is better to do them at those times. God the Exalted has said, *We have made the Quran easy to remember. So is there anyone that will remember?* (QURAN, 54:17). The Prophet ﷺ has said, "Anyone who recites the Quran, and then thinks that someone else has been given something better than his recitation, has belittled what God has magnified."[127] And he has said ﷺ, "God has said, 'When someone is too occupied with the Quran to mention Me and ask Me for something, I shall give him something better than what I give to those who ask.' The superiority of the Speech of God over all other speech is as the superiority of God over His creation."[128] Al-Bayhaqī has related on the authority of al-Nu'man ibn Bashīr that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The best of my nation's acts of worship is the recitation of the Quran."[129] He also related on the authority of Anas that [the Prophet] said ﷺ, "Illuminate your houses with Prayer and the recitation of the Quran."[130]

The recitation of the Quran is rewarded whether it be done with or without understanding, contrary to the other kinds of Remembrance. The Quran is the greatest preacher and the most powerful sermon which deters one from committing sins and transgressions and belittling the fulfillment of God's commands and prohibitions. It has been narrated that when a reciter of the Quran commits sins, the Quran addresses him from within, saying, "Where are my deterrents? Where are my threats? Where are my admonishments?" Maymūn ibn Mihrān (may God have mercy on him) said, "Some of you recite the Quran and curse themselves." "How could that be?" he was asked, and he replied, "You recite *May the curse of God fall upon the unjust* (QURAN, 7:44) while you are unjust, and *May the curse of God fall upon the liars* (QURAN, 3: 61) and you lie." It has also been related that inside the unjust person the Quran is like a stranger.

For this reason, all Muslims, especially those who aspire to the Way of the Afterlife, should make a regular habit of reciting part of the Quran, however small, every night and every day, taking care to be attentive and intone it correctly, since this brings an abundant reward and constitutes intimate communion with the Lord of lords. As for those *imāms* whose clear hearts have been opened to the understanding of the speech of God the Exalted and the delight of communing with Him, they have in their recitation of the Quran, night and day, the most sublime fount and the sweetest and most satisfying nourishment. The Formidable Quran is the wellspring of their hearts, the banishment of their sorrows, and their supreme delight in this world. It is a measure of their enthusiasm in reciting it that some of them recite it through four times during the night and four times again during the day. Some complete it once a week and others once a month, according to their determination and circumstances. They organize meetings and circles for it, and dedicate to their organizations charitable funds and the regular

income of properties inalienably endowed [*waqf*] for that purpose. They erect schools and colleges for the teaching of the Quran, make special celebrations and festivals for the completion of its recitation, and—before the advent of the printing press—vied with one another to write it with the most ravishing calligraphy. When printing became available, good people promptly arranged for it to be printed, so that accurate and attractive copies on fine paper came to be published in Istanbul and Egypt. Other Islamic lands followed suit, first among which were North Africa, Muslim India, and Pakistan. The latter in particular has produced copies which are, in print, accuracy, and elegance, a delight to behold. God shall reward them for their reverence for the sanctity of His Book and their extensive distribution of it. The Quran is thus surrounded by a rampart of exaltation and honor, a *book kept hidden, to be touched only by the purified* (QURAN, 56:78-9), safeguarded from debasement and abuse, not to be thrown among piles of books, into baskets, or in the street, and not to be given to a disbeliever or an atheist.

I have long been worried and puzzled about verses that are printed in newspapers and pamphlets, which are liable to be thrown away, torn up, trodden on, or used for wrapping food, something which is obviously abusive and disrespectful. The jurists have stated that such acts are forbidden, and that whoever deliberately does any of them is no different from someone who belittles the Quran and Islam, for God has concern for what He has rendered sacrosanct.

CHAPTER 43

Kinds of Remembrance

There are three kinds of Remembrance: of the heart, of the tongue, and of the heart and tongue combined, which is superior to the first two.

People have one of two objectives in Remembrance: the commonalty aspire to receive recompense, while the elite aspire to presence and closeness to God. Between the two degrees there lies a vast gulf, which separates those who gain recompense while remain behind their veil and those who draw nearer until they join the elect among the beloved.

God has established many kinds of Remembrance—as necessitated by His Majesty and Beauty—so that through them the stations and states of His servants may be perfected, until they receive the joy of Remembrance in the gardens of gnosis with the varieties of visions which they contain, and when the boredom that comes from stopping at a particular limit is removed. Of those varieties are: *tahlīl*, *tasbīḥ*, *takbīr*, *taḥmīd*, *ḥawqala*, and *ḥasbala*, as well as invocations using each of His Names, invocations of blessings on the Prophet ﷺ, and *istighfār*. Each of these invocations has its own special qualities and results

Tasbīḥ—[*Subḥān'Allāh* ("Transcendent is God")]—is an affirmation of the transcendence and holiness of the Real. It is to believe in His exaltation and His being totally beyond comparison as regards His essence, attributes, and actions, so that He is above anything which might suggest a flaw in His highness and perfection. Its result is to make one's *Tawḥīd* clear and unblemished, and to fill the heart with the glory of God and the uniqueness of His perfection. *To Him is the highest analogy in the heavens and on earth* (QURAN, 30:27).

Tahlīl—[*Lā ilāha illa'llāh* ("There is no god but God")]—brings forth a renewal of the kind of *Tawḥīd* and faith proper to the elite. Ordinary *Tawḥīd* is an attribute of every believer.

Takbīr—[*Allāhu Akbar* ("God is Greater")]—inspires the reverence and magnification of Him who is the Possessor of Majesty [*dhu'l-Jalāl wa'l-Ikrām*].

Taḥmīd—[*al-ḥamdulillāh* ("Praise be to God")]—and invoking the names which denote His benevolence and mercy, such as the Compassionate [*al-Raḥīm*], the All-Merciful [*al-Raḥmān*], the Generous [*al-Karīm*], the Ever-Forgiving [*al-Ghaffār*], and other similar names, lead to three stations: gratitude, firm hope, and love, for it is inevitable that one who does good will be loved.

Ḥawqala and *ḥasbala*—[*Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi'llāh* ("There is neither power nor ability save by God") and *Ḥasbunā'Allāhu wa ni'ma'l-wakīl* ("God is our sufficiency and the Best of Guardians")]—result in reliance on God, surrendering the management of one's affairs to Him, and placing one's trust in Him.

Names carrying meanings of knowledge and awareness, such as the Omniscient, the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, the Near, and the Witness, lead to vigilance [*murāqaba*].

As for the invocation of blessings on the Prophet ﷺ, this yields a strengthening of one's love and nearness to him and greater

scrupulousness in following his *sunna.*

Istighfār—[*Astaghfirullāh* ("I seek God's forgiveness")]—results in steadfast piety, care about the conditions necessary for repentance, and extricating oneself from the snares of sin.

If you wish to obtain all of these benefits, and attain to the highest ranks, then you should search for a litany which includes all these kinds of invocations and prayers. You are sure to find them in the litanies of our master Imām ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād, such as *al-Wird al-Laṭīf, al-Wird al-Kabīr, al-Rātib, Ḥizb al-Fatḥ,* and his *Ḥizb al-Naṣr.* Similarly, you should use the *Rātib* of al-Ḥabīb ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṭṭās, the litanies of Imām Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī, Imām al-Nawawī (including the contents of his book *al-Adhkār),* the *Ḥiṣn al-Ḥaṣīn* of Imām Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ḥizb al-Akbar* of Mullā ʿAlī Qārī, and many other litanies of great benefit that may be found—praise to God—throughout the nation.

I shall now present to the reader of this treatise some words of wisdom that were given to me by one of the great saints regarding the invocation of *Subḥān'Allāh wa biḥamdih.* He said:

> To feel and perceive the meaning of *wa biḥamdih* makes the invoker enter a vast space of gnosis, in which he comes to know the secret of the multiplication, growth, and blessings of deeds. That is because the personal pronoun in *wa biḥamdih* relates to God, the Majestic and High. When you say *Subḥān'Allah wa biḥamdih* you mean, "I extol Him with His own praise of Himself, which is as ancient and everlasting as Himself and which is circumscribed by no limits or boundaries." Thus, you are praising Him in a way with which He praises Himself. Similarly, in invoking blessings on the Prophet ﷺ, you are asking God to bless His Prophet with His blessing, which is as eternal and everlasting as Himself and which has no limit short of the extent of His knowledge. Thus the reward for this is infinite and without limit.

Invocation and prayer are founded on being attentive, collected, and able vividly to sense their meanings. This will lead to the delight

of the harvest and the flashing of lights. Imām ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-Ḥaddād writes in his *Treatise on the Good Manners of the Spiritual Disciple's Wayfaring*:[132]

> He who would delight in tasting some of the secrets of the path and having some of its realities unveiled before him, let him be intent on remembering God, the Exalted, with a heart that is present, courtesy that is abundant, attention that is sincere, and concentration that is piercing. Whenever these are combined in a person, to him is revealed the highest *Malakūt*, his spirit beholds the realities of the World of Utmost Purity, and the eye of his secret witnesses the Highest and Holiest Beauty.

In one of his poems he declares:

> Should you aim to be blessed with a luminous heart,
> That is pure from alterities, hold fast to Remembrance!
> You should keep to it always, by morning and night,
> And in every state, with your tongue and your heart.
> For should you adhere to it with concentration,
> A light will appear unlike the full moon or sun;
> A light that proceeds from God, that He mentions
> In the Sura of Light—so recite it with care.[133]

The invoker should beware of absentmindedness while he supplicates God. It is said in a hadith that "God does not respond to the supplication of a distracted heart."[134] How could the heart taste what it does not comprehend or understand what it does not reflect on? Someone whose heart is full of the images fed to him by his senses will seldom feel the meaning of *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*, even if he should repeat it a thousand times. On the other hand, if one repeats it only once when one's heart is empty of everything other than God, then one will experience a pleasure which cannot be described in words. Al-Ḥasan al-Basrī once said, "Seek sweetness in three things: Ritual Prayer, Remembrance, and the recitation of the Quran. If you find it, then praised be God! But if you do not,

then know that the door is closed." The "closure" can only be the result of sickness or distraction. *Or are there locks on their hearts?* (QURAN, 47:24).

CHAPTER 44

The Remembrance of the Gnostics

Because Remembrance is possessed of this high rank and honorable degree, it has been firmly held by those men of intellect whom God has granted success. They have devoted themselves wholly to it, used it in artful variations, and adopted it as a path to the Beloved. Their tongues and hearts pronounce it unceasingly, and they chant it *while standing, sitting, and on their sides* (QURAN, 3:191). Abū Bakr al-Siddīq (may God be pleased with him) used to intersperse his speech with *Lā ilaha illa'llāh*. Bilāl (may God be pleased with him) said, "One! One!" when tortured by Quraysh, finding comfort in the Name of his Lord, the One. *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* was made the best form of Remembrance because of its effect in purifying the inward from the blameworthy attributes which are worshipped outwardly. God has said (Exalted is He!), *Have you seen the one who takes his whim for a god?* (QURAN, 25:43). This formula negates all divinity with *Lā ilāha,* and then affirms the Divine Oneness with *illa'llāh,* as we have already stated in the chapter on "The Effects of *Tawḥīd* and of its Noble Phrase."

Remembrance overflows from the outward feature, which is the tongue, to the inward, which is the heart, in which it becomes

solidly rooted. From there it takes over and governs the senses. The sweetness of this is tasted by the one who has taken to Remembrance with the whole of himself, so that his skin and heart are softened. As God the Exalted has said, *Then their skins and their hearts soften to the Remembrance of God* (QURAN, 39:23). The softening of the heart consists in the sensitivity and timidity that come as a result of nearness and manifestation of the Divine Attributes. It is sufficient to have God as one's intimate companion! As for the "softening of the skin," this is the ecstasy and swaying from side to side which result from either delight and expansion or fear and awe. No blame attaches to someone who has reached this rank if he sways and chants, for in the painful throes of love and passion he finds something which arouses the highest yearning. Their poet has said:

> When I remember You I sway as though
> from the fragrance of the mention that is Yours
> I have been poured a wine.

The exhortation provided by fear and awe brings forth tears and forces one to tremble and be humble. These are the states of the righteous believers when they hear the Speech and Remembrance of God the Exalted. *Their skins shiver* (QURAN, 39:23), and *then soften* with their hearts and incline to the Remembrance of Him. They are covered in serenity and dignity, so that they are neither frivolous, pretentious, noisy, nor ostentatious. God the Exalted has not described them as people whose reasons have departed, who faint, dance, or jump about. Very rarely, the force of ecstatic love may overpower someone during Remembrance, thus taking him from himself. This is a state of intense passion, such as must be left to those who experience it and is not to be imitated. Al-Ḥabīb Abū Bakr al-ʿAydarūs censured those who transgress the boundaries of courtesy during sessions of Remembrance in one of his poems:

> A man lays claim to reverence
> while his limbs are shaking;

his ecstasy turns to movements,
and sometimes to leaps.
Everyone behaves like this
when in frivolous pleasure,
so the opposites of seriousness
and play are the same!
By God! had reverence
truly dwelt in his heart,
peace would have shown upon him
and humility to his Lord.
Tears would have flowed
from his fear of his Lord,
and he would have obeyed
the rules of true courtesy.
Such people's works are pious
abundant in courtesy.
But you found easier that which is easier,[135]
and you found unpleasant that which is harder,
so you left it, and followed them
in that which is easier,
vast is the gulf which lies
between truth and falsehood.

This is confirmed by the saying of the Prophet ﷺ, about a man who was playing with his beard during Prayer: "Had reverence been present in his heart, it would have been present in his limbs also."[136]

CHAPTER 45

Reciting Poetry During Sessions of Remembrance

For people of divine love and courtesy, no harm lies in rhythmic swaying, the recitation of poetry, the use of fine harmonies, and the unfurling of banners, in the course of assemblies of Remembrance. For it is here that they are reunited, and it is here that they are forgiven, as is mentioned in the hadith, "I bear witness to you that I have forgiven them." And if they are "the people whose companions are never wretched," then how high must their own rank be?

It has been reported in a sound tradition that Jabir ibn Samura said that the Prophet ﷺ had poetry chanted to him when he traveled, that Anjasha the Abyssinian chanted for the women, and al-Bara' ibn Malik for the men, and that the Messenger of God ﷺ said to Anjasha, "Be gentle when driving the riding beasts of the delicate vessels [the women]!"[137]

It is obvious that rhythmic harmonies shake hard hearts, move dormant souls, and have the effect of making character gentler and perceptions more subtle. They may turn cowards into heroes, misers into philanthropists, ease sorrows, and make misfortunes more bearable. The Sufis have always known the effect of audition on souls, and have therefore used it to refine them, attract them to

virtue, remind them of their origin, and of their First Beloved and of His most beautiful address to them in the "World of Atoms and Witnessing" [*ʿĀlam al-Dharr wa'l-Ishhād*].[138] This is illustrated by these verses of Imam al-Ghazālī, the Proof of Islam:

> I forsook the love of Suʿdā and Layla[139]
> in a dwelling
> and left for the companion
> of the very first dwelling.
> And love called me, gently! for these
> are the dwellings of your beloved;
> slow down, alight!

Small wonder, then, that they embellish their feasts with it and chant it in their celebrations, seasonal gatherings, and assemblies, as a means to attentiveness, while the cup of their meanings circulates among those present. Means are to be judged according to their purposes. When a proper melodiousness is used, the recitation of the Quran becomes a delight, and we have been ordered to recite it as such. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Embellish the Quran with your voices!"[140] meaning that one should recite it melodiously. And he once said, after listening to the recitation of Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, "He has been given one of the flutes of the House of David." When this was reported to Abū Mūsā, he said, "O Messenger of God! Had I known that you were listening, I would really have embellished it!"[141] The Prophet ﷺ had a pulpit set up in the mosque on which Ḥassān ibn Thābit would stand to praise and boast about the Messenger of God ﷺ, so that the Prophet said, "God supports Ḥassān with the Holy Spirit whenever he praises or boasts about the Messenger of God ﷺ."[142] This was done through poetry and in the mosque, so see what rank a poet may reach who rises to defend religion and make known the good qualities of the Master of the Messengers! His degree is not less than that of a preacher who summons and guides, for they both stand on the pulpit of summoning to God, defending religion, and subduing its enemies.

Similarly, when the Prophet ﷺ shifted mud bricks during the construction of the mosque with his Companions, he said: "This is the loading, not that of Khaybar; this is more faithful, Lord, and purer."[143]

Perhaps the intention behind this was to use beautiful mellifluous words, in poetry or prose, to increase ardor and determination in virtuous acts, and a striving that brings a goodly reward, to encourage people to engage in the struggle against the self which is the Greater *Jihād*, to arouse yearning, and to drive people to compete in these things. *For the like of this let the workers work!* (QURAN, 37:61).

The Prophet ﷺ used to tie the war-banners for some of his companions, and then permit them to recite poetry when the lines of battle confronted each other and to strut proudly, saying, "This kind of strutting is hateful to God, except in situations such as this,"[144] meaning situations in which people fight for the sake of God, to make *His Word supreme* (QURAN, 9:40).

To gather in courtesy and humility for Remembrance, after the manner of the people of *tarīqa*, and to invite others to such gatherings, and then to exchange the cups of love for God's sake, is not far removed from being itself a means to make the Word of God supreme and propagating it in cities and in desert regions. It has been said:

So keep me company with words akin to my state;
you'll please me; soon will I be rapt in joy.

CHAPTER 46

The Purpose of Tarīqa *and the Method of Its People*

The basic purpose of *tarīqa* is to struggle against the ego,[145] to purify it by acquiring pleasing traits of character, and to impose the Muhammadan *Sharī'a* on it inwardly and outwardly, all in the way followed by our virtuous ancestors. This is the Sufism which is derived from the statement of God the Exalted, *Successful is he who purifies himself and remembers the Name of his Lord and prays* (QURAN, 87:14-15). Because of its frivolous and extravagant nature, the ego can submit only to overwhelming power, clear proofs, or the ministrations of a skillful physician. The power of truth and guidance disappeared a long time ago, when temporal power and the Quran went separate ways, just as it was foretold by the truthful Prophet ﷺ, and a state based on favoritism and tyranny came into being, which cast religion aside, pursued its own interests, and attempted to establish firmly its own authority and might. As time went by and the generations among whom guidance and goodness had been paramount grew more remote, egotistic whims and passions became supreme, so that men's sight grew blind to the elucidating proofs of the *Sharī'a*. Therefore, God assigned for the preservation of His religion a group of people from each generation,

who shall continue to uphold the truth, unharmed by those who oppose them, until the Command of God[148] arrives.

These people are none other than those who keep and protect their Book, *Sunna*, and the way of their predecessors. They took the direction they were called upon to take in the Book and *Sunna*; they practiced the injunctions contained therein, and summoned unruly souls to them in gentle and wise ways, reconciling and attracting them through lawful pleasures and means of joy and delight from which the ego is not repelled, such as audition, various righteous assemblies of Remembrance, and other practices which help refine the soul and train it to acquire excellent traits of character and good habits.

This has always been the way of the guides on the Path and the eminent summoners to God among the nation of Muḥammad. These men voyaged deep into territories remote from the lands where Islam was practiced and reached uncharted places where those who invite people to Islam seldom penetrate, except those who have given themselves to God and consent to endure such hardships as would terrify people who are accustomed to comfort. This they did in obedience to their Prophet ﷺ who had said, "Convey something of my message on my behalf, even if it is not more than one verse."[149] Thus did they join those people of God's contentment who are from the best of the nation of Muḥammad ﷺ.

> Such are the Prophets' substitutes,
> brought forth
> by the merit of God's Messenger,
> in the best of religions.

They carried out their guidance and trained their disciples and followers, by means of adhering to this excellent method.

CHAPTER 47

The Qualities and Merit of the Shaykh who Trains

In this way it becomes apparent that there is special benefit to be had in learning from shaykhs, and that someone who has no shaykh is like a person who has lost his way. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Take your rites from me,"[148] and "Pray as you have seen me pray."[149]

A certain gnostic once said, "Whoever has no teacher to connect him to the chain of followers and to remove the veil from his heart is in this path as a fatherless foundling and a pretender of unknown lineage." How can it be otherwise, when the path of wayfaring and purification is obscure and the paths of the devil numerous? Imām Ahmad [ibn Hanbal] relates that ʿAbdallāh ibn Masʿūd (may God be pleased with him) said, "The Messenger of God ﷺ once drew a line with his hand, saying, '*This is the path of your Lord, straight*' (QURAN, 6:126). Then he drew many other lines to its right and left and said, 'These are the paths, each of which has a demon on it, who invites to it.' Then he recited, "*This is My path, which is straight, so follow it, and follow not the [deviating] paths, lest they divert you from it*" (QURAN, 6:153)."[150] Therefore, a man who has no shaykh to guide him will inevitably be led by the Devil to his own way. Someone who travels across dangerous deserts on his own and

with no guide is putting himself at risk and will perish. A man on his own is like a tree growing unattended, which may soon dry up; even if it survives for a while it will only produce leaves, but no fruit. How excellent are the following verses:

> A man may think that books are of some use to men who understand,
> in gaining knowledge.
> The ignoramus cannot know therein are mysteries which daze
> the most astute.
> Should you pursue the sciences but lack
> a shaykh, you stray
> from the straight path and track
> And things will be so much confused for you that you'll be lost,
> and know as much as an ass.

Likewise, there are indications in the Quran: *On the day when We shall call each people by their leader* (QURAN, 17:71), meaning that each people will be called according to the person they followed. The faithful have taken the Prophets as leaders, and their heirs among the scholars, while the people of disbelief follow the leaders of misguidance, as God the Exalted has said: *We made them leaders, summoning to the Fire* (QURAN, 8:41). Bukhārī and Muslim relate that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Each nation shall follow that which it had worshipped. Those who had worshipped false gods shall be following them."[105] The winners are those whose leaders are the Greatest Messenger and his noble group, who are the leaders of guidance, the men of God, and His viceroys among His servants on earth. They are the ones who were described by Imam ʿAlī (may God honor his face) when he said:

> They are the fewest in number, the greatest in rank in the sight of God. By them does God protect His creation; they are His proof on His earth, until they bequeath it to their likes, and plant it firmly in their hearts. By them, knowledge has taken by assault the reality of things, so that they find easy what those given to comfort find hard, and find intimacy in what the ignorant find desolate. They go through this life with bodies whose spirits are attached to the

> Highest Vision. They are the vicegerents of God the Exalted in His land. How one yearns, how one yearns to see them![152]

They are the skilful physicians whom God has assisted with *a spirit from Him*, so that they treat the diseases of hearts with wisdom, and pour guidance into pleasant and permissible moulds in order to take the ordinary people along the road of their desires to the desired truth, so that they join God's faction without being aware of it. "He who loves a certain people becomes of them." It is therefore not surprising that the religion has been preserved by this particular group and by those who attach themselves to it and follow in its tracks in unfurling the banners of *da'wa*, and in making the Word of Truth supreme throughout the land, despite the denial, corruption, obscenity, and deviation which in this age has spread through every region and in each assembly, and despite the grievous silence and the shirking of both those who have knowledge and those who have political power. There is no ability or power except with God.

Now, should you wish to know the attributes of the shaykh who can be followed in the way set forth above, then you should know the following. The word "shaykh" means literally "an old man whose hair has turned gray." The word is also commonly used to refer to a man of reason and experience, so that one speaks of the "shaykh" of a town or village or the "shaykh" of a tribe. As a technical term, however, the word denotes someone who is well versed in the three sciences of the *Sharī'a*, which are:

1. Faith [*īmān*] which is the subject matter of the sciences which pertain to *Tawḥīd* and the principles [*uṣūl*] of the religion.
2. Submission [*islām*], which is the subject matter of the disciplines of jurisprudence [*fiqh*] and the *Sharī'a*.
3. Excellence [*iḥsān*] which is the subject matter of the science of *ḥaqīqa* and is required for wayfaring and *ṭarīqa*.

The shaykh who trains and qualifies people is someone who has reached the degree of being learned and devout, and can train, refine, and guide others along the path to the Real, even if he is yet a young man. He is a physician of spirits, who uses the medicines that God has taught him to use to cure the obstinate sicknesses which afflict them.

In the language of the hadith experts, a "shaykh" is someone who has learned both the texts and the chains of transmission of one hundred thousand hadiths.

Other definitions of a shaykh are: Someone who teaches you with his words and elevates you with his state; someone who benefits the seeker and unlocks the sought; and someone who is perfected in himself and perfecting to others.

Every art should be taken from its masters. One does not rely on a Sufi for jurisprudence, unless he is known to have mastered jurisprudence and to have upheld it in practice. Similarly, one does not rely on a jurist in questions of Sufism, unless he is known to be worthy of it and to have upheld it in practice. Nor does one rely on a hadith specialist for either of these unless he is known to have upheld them in practice. Anyone who speaks about a discipline other than his own will come up with the most remarkable oddities.

We must lay the blame nowadays at the door of many scholars and other eminent people, and students also, for maintaining a profound silence and an indecent apathy to propagating the call to Islam and to transmitting it by all possible means to all those whom they can reach in every region of the earth. This is an inescapable responsibility which they carry around their necks, for it is to this that they have pledged their oath and covenant.

On the other hand, we must not blame and denigrate those followers of any of the shaykhs who are on rightly guided paths, have praiseworthy qualities, and have been selected for the call to God. They gather the common people around that which draws

them nearer to God, His Messenger ﷺ, and the virtuous among His servants, and removes them from the shadowy depths of their unawareness and the abysses of their worldly life, to the salvation of those whose security is in Remembrance, having entered its impregnable fortress. This is indicated in the hadith, "This world is accursed, and all that it contains is accursed, except the Remembrance of God, and what follows from it."[illegible] Such a man must not be accused of bringing in heterodox practices and superstitions. How could such a claim be made when he is calling the heedless to the Remembrance of God the Exalted, inviting them to return to Him, under the sign of religious harmony and brotherhood based on faith and on the basis of affection and love for the sake of God? On the contrary, we ought to decorate him with a medal of gratitude, firstly for his bearing the burden of summoning to Islam, and secondly for relieving us of this endeavor and responsibility. However, should we, at any time, observe any deviation in his behavior, or any transgression of the boundaries, we should guide him gently and with insight to the kind of behavior and courtesy required of people who call to Islam and to Remembrance. We should speak up but with kindness, for however high his rank may have become, he is still under the authority of the *Sharīʿa* and the good manners laid down through Prophecy.

Had the shaykhs of the Path in this age been rigorous in observing the courtesies of Remembrance and the Path and in inculcating them into their followers, they would have found it helpful in their wayfaring and their attainment to the Presence of the King of Kings. This would have been a delightful gift, with no blood spilt, no fear of the political authorities, and no battles. Unfortunately, however, they (and I am not saying all of them, only the unrefined among them) have confined themselves to formalities and outward manifestations, and have disfigured the landmarks of the radiant Path, thus presenting the critical thieves and the weevils who eat

away at belief with the opportunity to vilify their exalted rank. Additionally, they have opened a crack for their assaults by being fragmented into groups which are not united in their efforts to reach the intended goal, as well as by a certain extremism in doctrine and by celebrating glories that have no bearing on the objective. In this way, they wrong themselves and invite criticism. The Path itself is innocent of all this.

> An eye infection makes the eye deny the sun,
> and sickness makes the mouth
> pure water's taste to shun.[154]

CHAPTER 48

To Be of Good Counsel to Every Muslim Is a Duty

To the shaykhs of *tarīqa*, I give this word of advice. Direct your followers to the path of real guidance, establish harmony between the members of the various *tarīqa*s and unify their goal, so that it may be for the purpose of making the word of Truth supreme and to extend the Remembrance [of God] among the people.

In the inner urge to obey, and in the healing medicine of good counsel, we will find, praise be to God, enough to soften all that is hard, bring near the remote, and heal all wounds. These are the pivots upon which the whole matter depends and in which its foundations are set. Jarīr ibn ʿAbdallāh al-Bajalī (may God be pleased with him) once said, "I gave my pledge to the Messenger of God ﷺ, to establish the ritual Prayer, to give the *Zakāt*, and to be of good counsel to every Muslim."[155]

And [the Prophet] said ﷺ, "Religion is good counsel," repeating this phrase three times. [His Companions] said, "Counsel for whose sake, O Messenger of God?" And he replied, "For the sake of God, His Messenger, His Book, and the leaders of the Muslims and their commonalty."[156] This was the way and the practice of the Prophets. God the Exalted has said that Noah ﷺ declared, "*I*

am counseling you" (QURAN, 7:62). Likewise, Hud ﷺ said, "*I am a trustworthy counselor unto you*" (QURAN, 7:68). And to the best of His Prophets, [God] said, *Say, "This is my path, I summon to God, clear-sightedly, I and those who follow me*" (QURAN, 12:108).

It is common knowledge that to offer and to accept advice is an obligation, this being among the most important duties which flow from *Lā ilāha illa'llāh*. No Muslim can avoid either of them; he is not excusable if he remains silent when he sees something reprehensible. Rather must he change or remove it at one of the three degrees of faith mentioned in the hadith: "When one of you sees something reprehensible, he should change it with his hand. If he cannot do this, then with his tongue; and if he cannot, then with his heart, which is the weakest degree of faith."[157] The first degree, which is to effect the change with one's "hand" can usually be achieved only by those in positions of power and high office, and those appointed by the ruler as judges and police magistrates, and those who have dedicated themselves to the struggle for God's sake. The second degree, which is to effect the change by speaking, is available to the majority of Muslims, although it is a more emphatic duty for the scholars, since they are aware of the rulings laid down by God the Exalted, and they know how to speak and how to restrain and admonish people by means of sermons and wise words. This is generally possible for them in gatherings, lectures, and sermons. It is recorded in a hadith that "Whenever God gives a learned man knowledge, He takes a covenant from him similar to that which He took from the Prophets, whereby they were obliged to make the knowledge clear to the people."[158] This degree is accessible to all save the wholly ignorant and the neglectful scholars. The third degree is to change it with one's heart, in which the heart must find it unpleasant and hateful, and implore God to remove it. This is the act of one who is powerless to change it with his hands or tongue. A man who is content with a sin is party to it, even if he is

in the east and the perpetrator [of the sin] is in the west. The third degree is also of those who fear that to make a public denunciation would result in sedition or extreme damage or that the sin would be committed even more. All this has been established clearly in the books of the scholars.

By my life! Ours is a time in which many of the scholars have resorted to silence and concealment, so that they no longer reprove evildoing or show concern for their religion. They produce excuses that are not acceptable and that do not relieve them of their responsibility. What is the matter with them that they instead are roused with what concerns their egos or their wealth? Would that such energy had been expended in the defense of religion and the protection of the *Sharīʿa* of the Master of the Messengers!

The jurist and poet Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar Badhīb of Ḥaḍramawt penned these excellent lines in one of his poems:

O men of knowledge, may you not enjoy its fruit
if this knowledge that is yours is not used for God.
How long will you delay before you act
to relieve this religion's distress.
In earnest now—rise up in its defense,
for this can only come from you,
let there be no excuse.

Indeed the most tragic thing, for which there can be no excuse whatsoever, is the way in which many righteous people ignore what goes on inside their own houses and within their own families, including unseemly behavior, a disregard for the exalted proprieties of Islam and its inviolable boundaries, and allowing oneself to drift with the current of the times. Their failure to speak out against this sets the worst possible example, and puts a weapon in the hands of the transgressors. *Say: Are those who know equal* to *those who do not?* (QURAN, 39:9).

CHAPTER 49

The Sedition of the Deviationists

More serious, however, than all the above is when some people who call themselves Muslims accept the opinions of the deviationists [*al-malāḥida*]. Finding these ideas admirable, they reject religion entirely, asserting that its injunctions are no longer worthy of consideration, have been abrogated, and are unsuited to modern civilization, and therefore there is no more need for the old yellow books of religion.

These things we have heard and read in newspaper articles. How is one to interpret what they say? There is no doubt that they have deviated and departed the realm of Islam and taken a path different from that of the believers: the path of disbelievers and deviationists. They have given precedence to the caprices of their egos, to deviating sects, and to worldly desires. They have considered permissive tendencies to be lawful and followed with servility those transgressors who summon people to them. Their calling themselves Muslims will avail them nothing since their claims have rendered them apostates; neither will the deviationist leaders whom they follow protect them from God's chastisement. They will be dragged into the Fire on their faces, and it will be said to them,

"Taste the touch of Saqar!" (QURAN, 54:48).[159] God the Exalted has said: *Those who have turned their backs, after having clearly perceived the guidance, have been tempted and seduced by the Devil for they said to those who found hateful what God had sent down: "We shall obey you in some of this affair." But God knows their secret communications* (QURAN, 47:26). And He has said (Exalted is He!), *It shall not avail you this day, for you have been unjust, that you share in the same torment* (QURAN, 43:39). The second verse, although according to the opinion of Qatada revealed regarding the disbelievers among the People of the Book, and according to al-Dahhāk (on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbas) regarding the hypocrites, nevertheless extends to anyone who has apostatized from Islam at any time and under any circumstances. This includes those who have taken deviationists to be their leaders. They could have told the deviationists who had both seduced and frightened them, and made disbelief and corruption attractive to them by using various means of sedition and inducement, what their virtuous ancestors had said to those who had behaved similarly towards them, namely: *They were told by people, "The people have marshaled their forces against you, so fear them!" But this only increased them in faith, and they said: "God is enough for us, and He is the best Guardian." They returned with bounty from God and favors, no evil touched them, and they followed what was pleasing to God* (QURAN, 3: 173-74). Had they done this they would have been cleaving to an unshakeable handhold and an invincible power. Contemplate His words, *But this only increased them in faith:* how the gathering of the foes and the panic-mongering of the tale-tellers only increased them in courage, steadfastness, limitless strength, enthusiasm in the defense of religion, and faith in the victory that God had promised them when He declared, *It is binding on Us to give victory to the believers* (QURAN, 30:47).

From God's true servants
who seek His immense reward,

Warriors will arise
to uproot disbelief.
Until Islam's true faith
gains triumph by them;
And religion's, family, after schism,
is one fief;
Such men are mountains,
ask those who are crushed against them,
Of how they bore down on their foes;
Their fragrance to your courts
by winds of triumph rushed,
You'd think that warriors in armor are fragrant flowers.[160]

Then, expressing what their hearts were full of, namely their finding strength and protection in God and reassurance in His promise, they declared: "*God is enough for us!*" His good keeping and management fulfill all our needs, and "*He is the best Guardian*" for those who rely on and place their trust in Him, and whom He rewards for this by taking over their affairs, granting them His victory, and protecting them from the evil of their enemies, so that *they returned with bounty from God* under the fluttering banners of victory and honor, *and favors*, namely, conquest and the spoils of war, and, as He says in another verse, *It only increased them in faith and submission* (QURAN, 33:22).

God's protection renders needless
suits of amour and tall walls.

CHAPTER 50

Jihād *in the Path of God*

We have been led to digress and must mention *jihad*, for it is the foremost foundation of religion and its most exalted duty. By means of it, God has raised up the rank of Islam and Muslims, and abased that of idolatry and idolaters. It is the highest form of enjoining good—the highest level of good being Islam and *Tawhīd*—and is the most exalted form of forbidding evil, since the vilest of reprehensible things and of sins is disbelief and idolatry. It is an obligation which is a public duty [*wājib kifaya*], in which one can either participate in person or through one's wealth. When Muslim land is invaded by an enemy, it becomes obligatory upon all who are capable of bearing arms and upon those appointed by the leader of the community.[A] The beginning of *jihād* is summoning [the aggressors] to God and Islam, followed by waging war on those

[A] It is worthy pointing out, in view of the ignorance, chaos, and misguided choices that certain Muslims may be led into in these times, that *jihād* is something that must be decided and declared by the legitimate leader of a *Muslim* country, as the author explicitly states. Never may individuals or groups wage their own private war and call it *jihad* and impose it upon Muslims as some kind of obligation or religious duty. Nor may *jihad* be for anything except defense. — *Translator*

who refuse and persist. Every Muslim should have the intention to do this, and should encourage himself to it, in order to escape the fate which those who do not do so are threatened with. The Prophet ﷺ has said, "A man who dies without having participated in a sortie and without even having turned the idea over in his mind, dies as a partial hypocrite."[161] One should repeatedly ask God for martyrdom [*shahāda*]. The Prophet ﷺ said, "A man who sincerely asks God for martyrdom shall be granted the status of a martyr even if he dies in his bed."[162] In a hadith it is said that martyrs long to return to the world to be slain ten times over, because of the great merit which they have seen attaching to martyrdom.[163] He also said ﷺ:

> God guarantees to "those who go out for My sake only to fight for Me, because of their faith in Me and their belief in My Messengers, that I will cause them to enter the Garden, or else return them laden with their share of rewards or spoils, to the homes whence they had come." By Him in whose hand lies the soul of Muhammad, none of you is wounded in the way of God but that he shall appear on the Day of Arising just as he did on the day he was wounded. His color will be that of blood, but his odor that of musk. By Him in whose hand lies the soul of Muhammad, were it not that the Muslims would have found it difficult [to emulate me], I would never have stayed behind a force going out to fight in the way of God; but I have not enough mounts to give them to ride, neither have they, and it would be hard for them to be left behind each time I went. By Him in whose hand lies the soul of Muhammad, I wish I could go out and fight for the sake of God and be slain, then fight and be slain again![164]

Thus did the master of all creatures express his wish and aspiration to fight, to be slain, and to achieve martyrdom; even though such a thing is of lesser rank than Prophethood and Messengership. How great a privilege, then, is martyrdom, that the Master of the Prophets himself should have yearned for it! May the eyes of cowards never sleep!

Battle is only to be sought out against disbelievers and hypocrites. God the Exalted has said, *O Prophet, fight the disbelievers and the*

hypocrites! (QURAN, 9:73); and *Fight them until no sedition remains, and religion becomes wholly God's* (QURAN, 2:193). As for warfare and fighting among Muslims for the sake of leadership, political power, and for whatever else this life has to offer, or for group loyalties, nationalism, philosophies of progress, Baathism, reaction, sectarianism or socialism, this constitutes one of the greatest of sins and the most monstrous of crimes. It is the product of ignorance [*jahiliyya*]—and what ignorance is worse than that of the twentieth century? God the Exalted has said, *The punishment of someone who deliberately slays a believer shall be the Fire to perpetuity, and God will be angry with him and will curse him* (QURAN, 4: 93). The Prophet ﷺ said in his sermon at the Farewell Pilgrimage, "Indeed, God has made your blood, wealth, and honor sacrosanct, just as He has made sacrosanct this day of yours and this month of yours. Mark well my words. And do not, after I am gone, return to disbelief and strike at one another's necks."[165] And [the Prophet] ﷺ said, "The annihilation of the world would be less grave in God's sight than the unjustifiable killing of a single believer."[166] And "If all the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth were to share in spilling the blood of a single believer, God would make them all enter the Fire."[167] He also said ﷺ, "Anyone who assists in the killing of a Muslim, even with so much as half a word, will meet God with the phrase 'Despairs of God's Mercy' written between his eyes."[168] There are many other warnings concerning this matter; so what excuse can be produced by those who regard this kind of murder among their brother Muslims as legitimate? *And when he turns away he stalks the earth to bring ruin upon it, to destroy harvests and cattle; and God abhors corruption. And when he is told, "Fear God!" arrogance takes him into sin. Hell will be sufficient for him; an evil abode* (QURAN, 2:205-06).

Had this energy been expended in fighting the disbelievers and those who have confiscated Palestine, and other such enemies of

religion who are ever watchful for opportunities and attack us from all directions, the fruits of victory would have been harvested, together with reward and manifest triumph. But instead, this energy is a manifestation of wretchedness and misguidance, and conducts those who expend it to the abysses of wrath and woe and to being reviled both by history and by succeeding generations. *Do they not see that they are given trials once or twice each year, yet they do not repent, or remember?* (QURAN, 9:126).

My brother, the erudite scholar ʿAlawī ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād, penned the following truths in one of his poems:

May a nation hope for good,
when among itself
swords are drawn
against its own sons?
When angry for their honor,
certain souls become
prepared to slay them,
and awful death must come.
They all say: Muslims!
but they're ever and anon,
at war against Islam
until their war is done.

So let whoever is capable of *jihād* do it, and let him hurry and roll up his sleeves and be neither lazy nor remiss. And let whoever is not capable harbor good intentions regarding *jihād*, and pray to God abundantly on behalf of those who go, and help them as much as he can. In a hadith it is said that "the one who equips a warrior has fought; the one who looks properly after the family of an absent warrior has fought."[169] The one who provides for a soldier receives seven hundred dirhams for each dirham that he expends.[170] I would include in this category assistance gathered for people who defend Islam and its sacrosanct territories—as in the case of Palestine—together with means expended on their dispossessed and dispersed families and relatives. May God honor those who do good!

We have already mentioned in the chapter on inward struggle [Chapter 37] that the *jihād* against the ego is the Greater *Jihād*, for it is a kind of war in which no truce is possible as long as one has an "ego that incites to evil" [*nafs ammāra bi'l-sū'*]. As our master Joseph the Truthful ﷺ said: "*I do not absolve myself. Truly, the self ever incites to evil*" (QURAN, 12:53). And our own Prophet ﷺ, has said, "A fighter [*mujāhid*] is someone who fights his caprices, and a emigrant [*muhājir*] is someone who renounces what God has forbidden."[17] This is because there are certain specific times in which the *jihād* of armed combat can be carried out, after which it ends, which is not the case with the *jihād* against the ego. Similarly, emigration in the time of the Prophet was to Madīna. Thus the true fighter did not endure hardships and dangers, heroic battles, and the separation from family and property, until he had conquered his caprices and subdued his ego for the sake of God's pleasure. Likewise, the true emigrant did not endure the bitterness of exile and find it sweet until he preferred keeping the company of the Messenger to remaining at home with his own people and kin. This was brought about by Providence, by responding to the call of truth, and by keeping the company of the best of all people.

It is a well known fact that in the *jihād* against the ego one must acquire arms, equipment, and helpers if one is to be able to subdue it and proceed on the path to the Real so as to attain the station of *Tawhīd* and perfect intimacy in the proximity of the One, the Glorious. Without them there can be no victory. These arms and equipment consist of useful knowledge and good works, which lead to the coolness of certainty and the reality of faith. The helpers are the guides on the Path, who point out its landmarks, and *who transmit the Messages of God* (QURAN, 33:39) and take each others' hands in traveling this rocky terrain and ascending these heights. They are beacons to the travelers, guides for the perplexed, the waymarks, and the very essence of realization. My master and

shaykh, the great scholar 'Alawī ibn Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād (may God sanctify his secret) has described them as follows:

> They make those who are at a standstill move and cause stragglers to catch up. By their proofs transgressors are rebuked, and by their light the bewildered are guided. By beholding their seriousness, the distracted and the apathetic arise. By the training which they give, the stragglers and the defective are made perfect, and indolent backsliders are made to enter the racecourse. Their actions multiply their lights; their zeal purifies their states. In penitence they turned to Him, so He guided and chose them. They answered His summons and took Him for their Ally, so He drew them nearer and granted them His alliance. He made them draw near by their obedience and to grow radiant by their actions. He loved them and caused them to be loved because of their ardor. *Those who believe and do good shall be given love by the All-Merciful* (QURAN, 19:96). He uncovered for them the lights of exalted unveiling, and adorned their hearts with a coruscating light from Him, so that by it they were able to see the flaws in peoples' souls, the defects in their actions, their various states, the way stations of the travelers, and the alighting places of inspirations and spiritual states. By it they saw into the meanings of the Divine Names and Attributes, their lights, influences, and the realities of gnosis, such as lie beyond all definition or description. *God increases those who are rightly guided in guidance, and the good deeds which endure are better in your Lord's sight in reward, and better for the resort* (QURAN, 19:76). He gave them two lives in this world, [the second being] the life of gnosis, joy, intimacy with God, and the greatest felicity. He gave them *two measures of His mercy* (QURAN, 57:28). In their hearts He inscribed faith and gave them knowledge and the light of discernment, and blessed them, together with His angels, *in order to bring them out of the shadows and into the Light* (QURAN, 2:257); and supported them with a *Spirit from Him* (QURAN, 4:171). So that they joined the people of success and of victory.

God the Exalted has said: O *believers, if you fear God, He will give you a source of discernment* (QURAN, 8:29); and *Fear God,*

and He will teach you (QURAN, 2:282); and *he who was dead and whom We brought to life and gave a light wherein he walks among men* (QURAN, 6:122); and O *believers, fear God and believe in His Messenger; He will give you two measures of His mercy and appoint for you a light wherein you may walk* (QURAN, 57:28); and *these are the ones on whose hearts He has inscribed faith, supported by a Spirit from Him, and whom He shall bring into Gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they shall abide to perpetuity. God is well-pleased with them, and they are well-pleased with Him. They are the party of God. Indeed, the party of God are the successful* (QURAN, 58:22); and *Whosoever obeys God and the Messenger, they are with those whom He has favored: the Prophets, the* Ṣiddīqun *the martyrs, and the virtuous, who are the best of companions. Such is the favor of God, and God is sufficient as Knower* (QURAN, 4: 69-70).

We entreat Him, who is the most generous of all who are beseeched, to set us among those whom He has favored, looked upon with the gaze of His mercy, brought to attain their every goal, and whose lives He concluded with the best of endings.

The treatise is completed.
Praise is for God.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. Ahmad (12600).
2. Tirmidhī (2682); Abū Dawūd (3641); Ibn Māja (223).
3. Muslim (2408); Tirmidhī (3788).
4. This hadith was authenticated by Imām Sakhāwī (d. 902 AH) who quotes its numerous chains of transmission in his book *Istijlab Irtqa' al-Ghuraf*.
5. To be legally responsible or accountable is to be of sound mind and to have reached puberty.
6. This is the first hadith in the compilation of Imām al-Bukhārī. A hadith is a tradition. Etymologically, it is that which is handed down by word of mouth from one generation to the next. A true religion is a tradition in the sense that it was handed down from heaven to earth, then from one generation to the next. The guarantee of authenticity of a tradition is in the authenticity of the chains of transmission through which it is handed down; if these are flawed, suspect, or entirely missing, there is every likelihood that what we have now is very different from the original.
7. The Living or the Alive, *al-Hayy*, He who is alive without deriving His life from another source.
8. The Sustainer, *al-Qayyūm*, is He who sustains the existence of all beings. Without this attribute, they would instantly vanish into non-existence.

9. Abu Dawud (3116), Ahmad (22127).

10. *Allah* is literally the one God; since God is *ilah*. *The* God, then, is *al ilah*, made into a single word, *Allah*, or, as it is commonly rendered into English, Allah.

11. Holiness is sublime purity. God's holiness is absolute. He is thus the absolutely sublime and pure.

12. This expression indicates that God is pre-existent, unpreceded by a cause, and also self-subsistent.

13. This is from the 112th sura of the Quran. The Unique is the Solitary, He who has no second, like, or equal. God is entirely independent of creation. Nothing emanates from Him. He begets nothing, and Himself emanates from no other; that is, He is not begotten.

14. These doctrines are those that concern death, the Hereafter, Judgment Day, and Heaven and Hell.

15. Gnosis is *ma'rifa*, the direct knowledge of higher realities. A Gnostic is a "knower by God" (*'arif billah*), who sees, hears, and acts by the power of God, rather than his own.

16. The Creator is He who brings beings out of nonexistence to existence. When used on its own, the term denotes all three functions of conceiving the beings in question, the act of bringing them out of nonexistence, and that of giving them their particular forms. Nonexistence here is not nothingness, but the presence of these beings as archetypes in the eternal knowledge of God.

17. The Producer is He who brings the model created in the eternal Divine intellect out into manifested existence.

18. The Fashioner is the giver of forms.

19. The Wise Disposer (*al-Mudabbir*) is He who manages the affairs of all creatures, great and small, making and executing all the decisions that concern them. To do it with wisdom is to bring about every event in the best manner to fit the overall plan, serving the purpose for which the universe was created.

20. Pre-existent, *azalī*, He who has no beginning . Eternal, *abadī*, He who has no end.

21. The Originator (*al-Badī'*) is He who creates things without need for a previous model. All His creatures are original.

22. God is the sole actor in existence since His is the only power able to bring about an act. If you think about and plan an action, you can only execute it if God provides you with the power and ability to do so, since His power and ability are the only ones that exist. Should He withhold these from you, you can plan all you wish, but you will be utterly incapable of moving and executing your plan.

23. *Idolatry, polytheism, association*: all three are rendered by the Arabic word *shirk*, which means to associate one thing with another. In worldly terms, a company made of a number of partners will be called *sharika*, a word derived from the same root. In matters of religion, it means to associate a created being or more with the Creator, attribute independent powers to it or them, thus setting up limited beings as autonomous gods besides the Absolute. By so doing, the Absolute is denied, since it can only be infinite and solitary. *Shirk* is being used to designate a variety of interrelated meanings, including the worshipping of idols of stone or wood, while setting them up as independent gods or as mediators between humans and the one God. This constitutes idolatry proper. Another variant is worshipping the sun, the planets, the stars, or any other natural phenomenon. Polytheism will include this as well as human beings and invisible entities, such as Zoroastrian dualism and the current conception of the Christian Trinity. We have opted for the term "idolatry" rather than "polytheism" or "association" for a number of reasons. First, it is immediately graspable by most people, while "polytheism" is much less familiar, and "association" entirely obscure in this context. Second, it conveys some of the subjective repulsiveness that the term *shirk* arouses in a Muslim. Third, when appropriately defined, it can be extended to include intelligible, rather than concrete, idols, such as wealth, power, self-admiration, ideologies, physical appetites, and so on.

24. To be accursed is to be severed from divine mercy.

25. The August, *al-'Azīz*, is He whose rank is so important, noble, and exalted, that He is beyond reach.

26. Bukhārī (7559); Muslim (2111).

27. The tongue of the state or of a creature's particular nature is the silent language of created beings. It is that which the perspicacious person may infer from observing those beings.

28. Bazzar (2373); Ibn 'Asakir in *Tarīkh Dimashq* (4:361-62); al-Hakim (382, 4238), al-Darimī (1:25).

29. Bukharī (3579); Tirmidhī (3633).

30. Ibn Asakir in *Tārīkh Dimashq* (39:120-21); *Majma' al-Zawa'id* (8: 299).

31. *Until when they reached the valley of the ants, an ant exclaimed, "O ants! Enter your dwellings lest Solomon and his host crush you unaware"* (QURAN, 27:18).

32. The religious sciences are those that constitute essential religious knowledge, such as the science of the Principles of Sacred Law, the various sciences of the Quran and of hadith, and jurisprudence. As for the accessory sciences, they are those without which it is impossible to master the primary ones, such as knowledge of Arabic, history, logic, and so on.

33. Bukharī (392, 1399); Muslim (20, 22).

34. Retaliatory punishments *(qasas)* are those based on "an eye for an eye, an ear for an ear, a life for a life," and so on. Statutory punishment *(hudūd)* are those defined with precision by law, such as whipping for the slanderer, stoning for the adulterer, and so on. Discretionary punishments *(ta'zir)* are left to the discretion of the judge or ruler.

35. Bukharī (335438); Tirmidhī (1553).

36. Every relative or contingent being must be the effect of a cause. Only the Absolute, the Infinite, which is beyond cause and effect, is in itself its sufficient cause.

37. *In their faces you recognize the freshness of bliss. They will be given to drink of a wine sealed—whose seal is musk* (QURAN, 83:24-26).

38. *Kāf* and *Nūn* are the two Arabic letters that form the work *kun*, which means *Be!* This is the word by which God manifests things into existence.

39. Bukhārī (2475, 5578); Muslim (57).

40. Ahmad (8710).

41. Ahmad (19606). Bukhari in *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, 1:250.

42. This is one of the pairs of opposites that Arab poets and Sufis are so

fond of. *Takhliya* is emptying and clearing the receptacle which is the heart from everything that may obstruct the entry of light. *Tahliya* is adorning and embellishing it with beliefs, Remembrance, and good character, so as to aid the influx of light. One also says *Takhallī*, abandonment, and *Tahallī*, adornment.

43. *Ibāda*, worship, is the carrying out of rites in accordance with the sacred law. *Ubūdiyya*, servitude, is to be sincere while carrying out these rites and surrender all of one's affairs to God. *Ubuda*, slavehood, is the state of the perfected worshipper who thinks, acts, and feels only by and for God, as stated in the hadith *qudsi* that follows in the text.

44. Bukharī (6502). This hadith *qudsi* contains the explanation of what is meant by *tawassul*. Since God has servants whose request He never refuses, then to ask of those to pray for one, or to ask God to grant one's request for the sake of one of His beloved servants is the sensible thing to do, rather than depend on the prayers of one's own sinful self.

45. Muslim (2699).

46. The first three generations are the best three generations of Muslims as declared by the Prophet ﷺ, when he said, "the best generation is mine, then the one that follows, then the one that follows that." Bukhārī (2508); Muslim (2535). They are thus the generations to be followed and emulated.

47. Tirmidhi (2728); Ibn Maja (3702).

48. Tabarānī in *Kabīr* (786); *Awsat* (3456); *Saghīr* (439).

49. The word *dharra* today means *atom*. Originally it was used to designate the smallest of ants, and, by extension, tiny specks and particles.

50. Munkar and Nakīr are the two angels responsible for questioning the dead soon after they are buried, about who their God is, who their Prophet is, and what was their religion.

51. Abū Dawūd (3116); Ahmad (22127).

52. Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Iman* (100); Tabarānī, *Awsat* (9445, 9478); Daylammi (5180).

53. Tirmidhī (3383); Ibn Māja (3800).

54. Tirmidhī (3585).

55. Daylammī (8101).

56. Ahmad (8710).

57. Tirmidhī (3519).

58. Bukhārī (3435); Muslim (28).

59. Muslim (99); Tirmidhī (2562); Ahmad (21653).

60. Tabarānī, *Awsat* (1235) and *Kabīr* (5074).

61. The first half of the hadith is in Muslim (916, 917); Tirmidhī (976); and Abū Dāwūd (3117), and many other books. It was variously interpreted as repeating *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* to the dying so that they remember to repeat it themselves; or to the dead after their burial, so that they are able to answer the two angels in the grave. The full hadith is in 'Abd al-Razzāq (6048).

62. Bukhārī (128); Muslim (32).

63. Bukhārī (425); Muslim (33).

64. Muslim (31).

65. Muslim (93); Ahmad (14711, 14433, 1506).

66. Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (10980), al-Hākim (1936); Ibn Hibban (6218); Abū Ya'lā (1393).

67. Bukhārī (2856, 5967, 6267); Muslim (30).

68. Bukhārī (1237, 2388, 3222); Muslim (94).

69. Ibn Maja (13); Tirmidhī (2664); Abū Dāwūd (4604, 4605).

70. Abū Dāwūd (3050).

71. Bukhārī (7280).

72. The Principles of Jurisprudence is the science of how to derive sound legal judgments based on textual evidence. It is the art of the *muftī*, that is, the scholar who is qualified to make such judgments. It is based on precise mechanisms defined by the leading authorities of old, among whom stands prominently Imām al-Shāfi'ī. It requires immense erudition and mental maturity, and should thus be reserved for specialists.

73. The Followers comprise the generation following the Companions. They are the second best of generations.

74. The People of Badr are the Companions who fought at Badr with the Prophet ﷺ. They are considered the most superior among the Companions after the four Caliphs and those specifically guaranteed Paradise, as foretold by the Prophet ﷺ. 'Umar used to gather them during his caliphate to take their opinion on important issues.

75. Communism was an ideology based on materialism. Now the ideology has been proven false and illusory, but the materialism survives and thrives in much of the world, so that all that was said by the author concerning this still applies in the fullest sense.

76. Incarnation is the imprisonment of the Absolute in the relative, of the infinite in the limited. It is a logical impossibility.

77. Ezra is the 'Uzayr mentioned in the Quran. For the Jewish cult of Ezra, see Mahmoud Ayoub, "'Uzayr in the Qur'an," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic Traditions*, Denver, Colorado, 1981.

78. The author names the scholars alluded to here as Abū Naḍra and Abū'l-'Āliya.

79. Since the Virgin Mary is called in Christian terms "Mother of God," the implication is that she herself is divine. This is how the word "mariolatry" came into being.

80. The Primary Cause or Prime Mover is God Himself. To believe that creatures or secondary causes have autonomous power is to set them up as gods beside God.

81. Acting out of ostentation or simply to satisfy some lust or appetite is to set one's intention in competition with sincerity with God. It is to worship one's ego, passions, or appetites.

82. Musaylima and Sajāh both claimed prophethood in Yamāma, present day Riyad, while Aswad claimed it in San'a, Yemen.

83. Al-Lāt and al-'Uzza were two idols that pre-Islamic Arabs worshipped in the Age of Ignorance.

84. *Kitāb al-Farqu bayna'l-Firaq*, by 'Abd al-Qādir ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī.

85. *Kitāb al-Fiṣal fī'l-Milal wa'l-Niḥal*, by 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥazm.

86. These are all sects the extremism of whom took them out of the limits of their Shī'a origins and into manifest disbelief.

87. *Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the*

Elephant? Did He not foil their scheming and send against them flocks of birds, which pelted them with stones of baked clay, and made them like eaten stalks? (QURAN, 105:1-5). The Makkan pagans who heard this sura recited by the Prophet ﷺ well knew that some of their living elders had witnessed this episode in their history. None of them objected or raised doubts as to the accuracy of the story told in the sura.

88. This hadith was narrated by over 75 Companions and recorded in Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Māja, Nasa'ī, Ahmad, Bayhaqī, Ṭabarānī, Bazzar, and Abū Ya'la.

89. Bukhārī (6045, 6103); Muslim (60, 61).

90. The Dajjāl is the Imposter who shall appear at the end of time, the Antichrist who will be fought by the Mahdī and slain by Jesus in his second coming.

91. Abū Dawūd (2532).

92. Bukhārī (48); Muslim (64).

93. Bukhārī (4339, 7189).

94. Tirmidhī (3346).

95. Bukhārī (4269, 6872).

96. Muslim (96); Abū Dawūd (2643).

97. Ibn Māja (199); Ibn Abī Shayba (29196).

98. Bukhārī (50, 4777); Muslim (8, 9, 10).

99. Bukhārī (3841, 6147); Muslim (2256).

100. The *fortunate*, as opposed to the *wretched*, are those whom God has destined for Paradise and guided to that which leads to it. They correspond to the blessed and the damned in Christian parlance.

101. *Ta'ṭīl* or neutralization or negation of the Divine Attributes is to interpret them in such a manner as to cancel their reality and reduce them to metaphors. The Mu'tazilites were guilty of this.

102. *Tashbīh* or anthropomorphism, on the contrary, is to the interpret the Attributes in such a concrete and human manner as to render God not only relative and finite, but material and resembling human beings. This is the Wahhabī manner of literal interpretation.

103. Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab al-Īmān* (120).

104. *The Book of Assistance*, the Quilliam Press, London, 1989, pp. 31-34.

105. Sūrat al-'Ankabūt contains the verse quoted above: *We shall surely guide to Our paths those who strive for Our sake* (QURAN, 29:69).

106. Bayhaqī in *Kitāb al-Zuhd al-Kabīr* (343).

107. Bayhaqī in *Kitāb al-Zuhd*, Daylammi, and Khaṭīb; quoted in commentaries of Zamakhsharī, Bayhaqī, and Bayḍāwī—all without any mention of its chain of transmission.

108. *Qūt al-Qulūb* by Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī (d. 386 AH). A detailed exposition of the heart's ailments and remedies, generally considered to be the precursor to Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*.

109. *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH) is the most complete and detailed work on serious Sufism.

110. *Al-Risāla fī 'Ilm al-Taṣawwuf* by Abu'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 465 AH). One of the earliest and most influential treatises on Sufism.

111. *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* by Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 632 AH). Another very important work on the practical aspects of Sufism. Considered a necessary text for centuries.

112. *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa'l-Raqā'iq* by 'Abdallāh ibn Mubārak (d. 181 AH).

113. *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā' wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā'* by Abū Nu'aym al-Asfahānī (d. 430 AH).

114. *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* by Imām al-Nawawī (d. 676 AH). A very popular collection of Prophetic traditions covering almost every aspect of a Muslim's religious and worldly affairs.

115. *Bustān al-'Ārifīn* by Imām al-Nawawī. A less well-known collection of traditions concerning sainthood in the Muslim community.

116. *Kitāb al-Adab al-Mufrad*, by Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256 AH).

117. *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa* by Abū Bakr ibn Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 458 AH). A collection of traditions concerning the miracles of the Prophet ﷺ.

118. Imam 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha'rānī (d. 973 AH). A well-known Egyptian scholar and sufi who authored works of great authority in both *Sharī'a* and Sufism.

119. Muslim (2726); Tirmidhī (3596).

120. Bukhārī (7405); Muslim (2675).

121. Transmitted by the famous Follower (*Tābiʿī*) Kaʿb al-Ahbār as having been said by God to Moses ﷺ. Bayhaqī, ***Shuʿab al-Īmān*** (680); Ibn Abī Shayba (1224); Abu Nuʿaym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā'*, 6:42.

122. Bukhārī (6407); Muslim (1299).

123. Abu Nuʿaym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā'* (6:111-12).

124. Tirmidhī (3377); Ibn Māja (3790).

125. Bukhārī (6408); Muslim (2689).

126. Bukhārī (6856); Muslim (4832).

127. Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-Īmān* (2590); Ibn ʿAsākir (68:225).

128. Tirmidhī (2962).

129. Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-Īmān* (2022).

130. Bayhaqī, *Shuʿab al-Īmān* (2023).

131. *Tahlīl* is *Lā ilāha illa'llāh* ("There is not God but Allah"). *Tasbīh* is *Subhān'Allāh* ("Transcendent is God"). *Takbīr* is *Allāhu Akbar* ("God is Greater"). *Tahmīd* is *al-hamdulillāh* ("Praise and thanks be to God"). *Hawqala* is *Lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā bi'llāh* ("There is neither might nor ability accept by God"). *Hasbala* is *Hasbuna'Allāhi wa niʿma'l-wakīl* ("God is our sufficiency and the best of Guardians"). *Istighfār* is *Astaghfirullāh* ("I seek God's forgiveness").

132. The English translation of *Risālat Ādāb Sulūk al-Murīd* is published by Starlatch Press, Chicago, 2002: *Two Treatises: Mutual Reminding and Good Manners*. This excerpt is taken from p. 59.

133. *God is the Light of the heavens and earth. The likeness of His light is that of a niche in which is a Lamp. The Lamp is in a glass, the glass is as if it were a glittering star, lighted from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east, nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth even if no fire touched it. Light upon Light. God guides whom He wills to His light, and gives examples to the people; and God knows everything* (QURAN, 24:35).

134. Tirmidhī (3479).

135. "That which is easier" is to pretend to be ecstatic, sway from side to side and jump about. "That which is harder" is to be pious and abundant in courtesy.

136. ʿAbd al-Razzāq (3309); Ibn Abī Shayba (2:289); Bayhaqī in *Sunan* (2:

285); Abū Nu'aym in *Hilyat al-Awliya'* (10:230).

137. Bukhārī (6149); Muslim (2323).

138. This is when God addressed the spirit of the Adamic race before sending them down into their earthly bodies, asking, "*Am I not your Lord?*" as related in the Quran (7:172).

139. Su'da (Happiness) and Laylā (Night) are feminine names used among others by Sufis as allusions to higher realities.

140. Abū Dāwūd (1468); Ibn Māja (1342); Aḥmad (18704).

141. Bukhārī (5048); Muslim (793).

142. Muslim (2490); Tirmidhī (2846); Abū Dāwūd (5015).

143. 'Abd al-Razzāq (5:396).

144. Ṭabarānī in *Kabīr* (6508); Ṭabarī in *Tārīkh* (2:511).

145. The ego is the soul in its untamed condition of "inciting to evil."

146. The "Command of God" is that which heralds the end of the world.

147. Bukhārī (6461); Tirmidhī (2669).

148. Muslim (1297); Abū Dāwūd (1970); Ibn Māja (3023).

149. Bukhārī (631, 6008, 7246).

150. Ibn Māja (11); Aḥmad (4142, 4437, 15277).

151. Bukhārī (806, 6573, 7437); Muslim (182).

152. This is Imām 'Alī's description of God's elite worshippers on earth. They are few in number, great in rank. Through their *baraka* (blessings) the community is protected and they bequeath their sainthood to their successors, who have to be qualified, from heart to heart by direct spiritual transmission.

153. Tirmidhī (2322); Ibn Māja (4112).

154. This verse is from Imām al-Būṣīrī's *Burda* (final verse of section 6).

155. Bukhārī (57, 58, 524); Muslim (56).

156. Muslim (55); Tirmidhī (1926).

157. Muslim (49); Tirmidhī (2172).

158. Daylammī (6263).

159. *Saqar* is the name of one area or degree of Hell.

160. These verses are from Imam al-Busīrī's *Burda* (section 8, verses 7, 8 10, 15; and section 5, verse 8).
161. Muslim (1910); Abu Dawud (2502).
162. Muslim (1909); Tirmidhī (1653).
163. Bukhārī (2817), 2795); Muslim (1877).
164. Bukhārī (7226, 7227, 7457); Muslim (1876).
165. Bukhārī (6785); Muslim (65, 1218).
166. Tirmidhī (1395); Ibn Maja (2619).
167. Tirmidhī (1398).
168. Ibn Māja (2620).
169. Bukhārī (2843); Muslim (1895).
170. Ibn Maja (2761).
171. Ahmad (23958, 23967).

TRANSLATOR'S APPENDICES

On Jihād

Jihād has become a thorny question spuriously misrepresented by the media and frequently misunderstood by many angry and ignorant Muslims. It is for the latter that the coming remarks are addressed. Ignorance in a Muslim is unacceptable since we are a community that bases its decisions and behavior on the detailed knowledge provided by the Quran and *Sunna*; it is not a community swayed by emotions. Muslims are angry, and rightfully so, because of the Palestinian situation; because of what Muslim minorities are suffering in various regions around the globe; because of the imposition of alien values, cultural hegemony, and overt immorality through the powerful paths of the media that bully its captives into accepting prefabricated images and ungodly assumptions; because Muslim governments are so weak, corrupt, and bent only on keeping their authority and continue fleecing their countries' resources that they are unable and unwilling to resist either cultural or military aggression. Since this book was first written, Muslims have increased in anger and, sadly, in ignorance, such that the present text, as clear as it is, has become open to misinterpretation in certain places. This is why we thought the following clarifications were called for.

The most important function of Muslims, both as individuals and as a nation, is *Da'wa*. When stating that this community is the best of all communities, God follows with the reason why: *You are the best nation brought forth to men, enjoining good, forbidding evil, and believing in God* (QURAN, 3:110).

Da'wa is to invite people to God and to teach them the path that leads to Him and to Paradise. Enjoining good is to invite people to *lā ilāha illa'llāh, Muḥammadun Rasūlu'llāh*, then to following the injunctions of the Sacred Law of Islam and adopting the Muhammadan model of virtue and nobility of character and behavior. It is also to dissuade people from worshipping other than God, ascribing to God attributes that limit His infinity, blemish His perfection, or do away with His transcendence.

Jihād is to strive to one's utmost to please one's Lord. For this reason, *Jihād* and *Da'wa* are often one and the same thing, which is alluded to in the Quran: *So obey not the disbelievers, but struggle against them using it [the Quran] with a mighty struggle* (QURAN, 25:52). *Struggle* or *Jihād* against the Makkan pagans is here defined as persistence in summoning them to God, reciting the Quran to them, explaining its meanings, and using it to refute their arguments. This verse also shows that God spoke of *Jihād* during the Makkan period, before the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions emigrated to Madīna and before the term acquired the further meaning of armed struggle.

There are many dimensions to *Da'wa*. The first concerns the individual in both his outward and inward aspects. To invite oneself to God and the Sacred Law is outwardly to conform with the Law's injunctions and prohibitions, and inwardly to attend to the ailments in one's heart, such as greed, lust, jealousy, thinking ill of others, and so on, and strive to replace these with the opposite virtues. To strive to achieve this with sincerity is *Jihād*, the Greater *Jihād* being the struggle against the ego, for the ego, until subdued, relentlessly

attempts to divert one away from both the outward observance of the Law and the inward purification of the heart.

Having achieved some degree of success in the Greater *Jihād*, one is expected to call others, especially those in his immediate vicinity, to God. Since resistance is inevitable, effort and perseverance will have to be expended. This, again, is *Jihad*.

Those whom God has chosen to spread his message across the lands, the virtuous scholars who have devoted their lives to this, are forced to travel far and wide, expend effort and money, and endure hardships and sometimes persecution. Yet they remain undeterred in their purpose. This also is *Jihād*.

Thus in all these endeavors, *Daʿwa* and *Jihād* coincide fully, the two terms being essentially interchangeable. This is why most treatises of *fiqh* begin their chapter on *Jihād* with the mention of the various modes of *Daʿwa*.

Lastly we come to armed struggle, the Smaller *Jihād*. War can be offensive or defensive. In the past, offensive wars were waged against declared enemies. Never was war waged against states with whom the Muslims had signed peace treaties, nor was Islam ever imposed by force upon the populations of conquered territories. Defensive wars were waged against such invaders as the Mongols and the Crusaders, more recently against the colonial powers. The purpose of such wars was the preservation of Muslim territories so that Muslims may carry on exhorting each other to good and forbidding each other evil. It is clear that the military kind of *Jihād* also has for its prime purpose the free exercise of *Daʿwa*, so that even if in this instance the two concepts do not coincide, they are nevertheless intimately related. Primacy is accorded to *Daʿwa*, *Jihād* being an auxiliary extension of it needed only under certain circumstances.

Today, in the twenty-first century of the common era, every country is presumed *a priori* to be at peace with every other

country, with the need for armed struggle arising only when the territorial integrity of the lands of Islam are threatened. When *Jihad* as armed struggle is called for, it must accord with the legal rulings of Islam, not the whims of extremist groups. War is conducted under the banner of a legitimate leader, who in these days will be the head of the state of which one is a citizen. A head of state is the only one permitted to declare war. And only in the context of an unequivocally just cause are people allowed to rally under his banner for *Jihād*. But if the war has no legal justification, then Muslims must refuse to participate in it, whatever the consequences. Examples of this are Saddam Hussein's criminal attacks against Iran and Kuwait.

As for terror, no reputable Muslim scholar worthy of the name can condone attacks against civilians. The reasoning for justifying such acts is usually an inverted kind of logic that starts from the desired conclusion followed by attempts to justify it with legal arguments. For example: "America is misguided in its support of Israel hurting the Palestinians. Therefore, we must hurt America. Hard targets are difficult to hit, since we are not efficient enough to reach them; therefore we must hit soft targets. Will someone be kind enough to twist textual evidence so as to produce a *fatwa* allowing us to kill American civilians?"

The correct reasoning is as follows: America is misguided in helping Israel iniquitously persecute the Palestinians. But what does our Sacred Law say we should do about it? When an objective, unemotional reading of the Sacred Law by qualified scholars leads to the conclusion that killing civilians is explicitly forbidden, then we should not allow our anger to overrule the legal verdict.

Finally, let us stress that the battle for preeminence is primarily intellectual, which brings us back to *da'wa* and the duty of every individual Muslim to acquire the knowledge necessary to steer himself and others to safety in these troubled times. As a rule of

thumb, to know if any course of action will be sanctioned by Sacred Law, see if it serves or hampers *da wa*, almost everything that does so will be found to be forbidden.

On Palestine

In the present climate, especially in the United States where people are regularly misinformed about what is happening in the Middle East, such statements as the author's encouragements to Muslims to donate to the Palestinian cause may be misunderstood. We must therefore remind non-Muslim readers that this was written at a time when Israel had expelled half the people of Palestine out of their homeland to refugee camps in the neighboring countries who were lacking the resources to cope with an exodus of this magnitude. Soon, Palestinian guerillas began to fight back by conducting military operations from bases near those camps. Both refugees and guerillas needed financial support, and this is what the author is referring to here. Since then Israel has had an unbroken record of terrorism unmatched by any other state organization or group. Illegal detention without charge running for years, systematic torture, extrajudicial executions in the occupied territories and assassinations of Palestinian activists abroad, mass killings as in Sabra and Chatila, assaults against civilians with missiles, helicopters, and fighter planes, killing of UN personnel, demolitions of houses, shooting children and adolescents to deter them from throwing stones at tanks and armored vehicles, conversion of mosques into cafes and clubs, forceful evacuation of the inhabitants from locations which are then confiscated to build illegal settlements, and many other violations of human rights and international law repeatedly denounced by organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. During this time Israel has refused to comply with eighty UN Resolutions. Yet it is

only the Palestinians who are now accused of terrorism. Having said that, we, as Muslims, are forbidden by *Sharīʿa* to retaliate in kind; we are not allowed to oppose terror with terror. We must maintain the rules of honor laid down by the Prophet ﷺ. We are not allowed to kill civilians, especially women, children, elderly people, the sick, or handicapped. We are not allowed to kill the wounded, mutilate corpses, demolish houses, burn crops, torture prisoners, or even humiliate them.

Thus, in speaking of funding the Palestinians nowadays, this would involve such things as helping the refugees, assisting in the reconstruction of their devastated infrastructure, and so on, not in funding the indiscriminate bombing of civilians.

GLOSSARY OF ARABIC TERMS

Abrar: The righteous; the best among common believers. We have consistently used "righteous" for *abrar*, while reserving "virtuous" for the *Salihūn*.

Adab: Spiritual courtesy; the attitude of reverence engendered by awareness of the Divine.

Ākhira: Hereafter, the life-to-come. Literally: that which follows.

Ansar: The Helpers; converts to Islam who resided in the city of Madīna and who received and assisted the Muslims who emigrated from Makka.

'Ārif bi'llah: Gnostic; one who has realized the state described in the hadith *qudsi* where God says, "I become his eyesight with which he sees; his hearing with which be hears..." He knows things by God, and not, as others, God by His signs.

Awrad: Plural of *wird* (see *wird*).

Badr: Site of the first major battle of Islamic history, fought in the year 624 CE between the Muslims and the idolaters of Makka.

Dajjal: The Antichrist.

Dunya: This world. Literally: that which is near, the implication being that the end of each of its beings and each of its moments is near, and that we are remote from the Divine Presence and the higher worlds to the extent that we are near to this world.

Da'wa: Calling people to God.

Dhikr: Remembering God.

Fatiha: The first su~~ra of the Glorious~~ Quran.

Fatwā: A verdict given by a qualified religious specialist.

Ghusl: The ritual washing of the whole body required by the *Sharī'a* at certain times.

Habīb: Beloved; one of the Blessed Prophet's titles is the "Beloved of God." The people of Southern Arabia have taken to giving this title to the descendants of the Prophet, the 'Alawī *sayyids*.

Hadith Qudsī: A Holy Tradition in which the Prophet ﷺ repeats the words of his Lord, but words that are not part of the Quran.

Hadra: Presence. *Al-Hadra al-Ilahiyya:* Divine Presence. The same word is used to designate a circle of people engaged in *dhikr*, since the purpose of *dhikr* is to be admitted into the Divine Presence.

Hāl: A transient spiritual state.

Haqīqa: Essential reality; the archetypes in the higher worlds.

Hasbala: The phrase *Hasbuna'Allāhi wa ni'ma'l-wakīl* ("God is our sufficiency and the Best of Guardians").

Hawqala: The phrase *La hawla wa la quwwata illa bi'llāh* ("There is neither power nor ability accept by God").

Ihsān: Spiritual excellence, defined by the Prophet ﷺ as to worship God as though you see Him; in the constant awareness that although you do not see Him, He sees you.

Imām: Leader of all or part of the *umma*; or the leader of the congregational Prayer; or the leading scholars of each generation.

Istighfār: To seek God's forgiveness, particularly by repeating the phrase, *Astaghfirullāh* ("I seek the forgiveness of God").

Jahiliyya: The pre-Islamic state of ignorance.

Jihād: Struggle for the sake of God.

Kāfir: Literally, one who "covers up"; but when applied to the truth and the decision to deny it, it means "disbeliever."

Kashf: Unveiling; certain knowledge which needs no proof; the direct perception of the real nature of things and is of many different grades.

Kufr: The state of disbelief.

Madad: Assistance, reinforcement.

Malakūt: The invisible subtle worlds.

Maqam: A spiritual station on the Path, more lasting than a *ḥāl*.

Ma'rifa: Gnosis; the direct knowledge of higher realities. It begins with inspiration *(ilhām)*, then unveiling *(kashf* or *mukāshafa)*, then contemplative vision *(shuhūd or mushahada)*.

Muftī: A person who gives authoritative legal verdicts or *fatwās*.

Muhājir: Anyone who emigrates, particularly for religious reasons.

Mujāhid: One who strives for the sake of God.

Muraqaba: Vigilance, unbroken attentiveness in the awareness that God watches.

Mushahada: Contemplation; the vision by the Eye of the Heart of the lights of the Divine Acts, then at a higher stage that of the Attributes, then that of the Essence.

Nafs: Soul; the psyche or ego, which is intermediate between the physical body and the luminous spirit. The downward pull of the body and lower psychic drives give it a dark passional aspect, while the upward pull of the spirit gives it a relatively luminous aspect. Reason and emotions, both of which are psychic elements, may be put to the service of either one of the two aspects.

Qibla: The direction of the Sacred House in Makka.

Rak'a: One unit of the ritual Prayer or *Ṣalāt*.

Rūh: Spirit; the reality of the human creature which transcends time and space since it is not part of the physical world.

Salāt: The obligatory ritual Prayer performed by Muslims five times a day.

Sālihūn: The virtuous; people of God who are either on the verge of or into the station of sainthood. Their rank comes below that of the Prophets and the *Siddīqūn*.

Saqar: A place in Hell.

Sayyid: Literally: lord or master. By convention it refers to a descendant of the Prophet ﷺ.

Sharī'a: The Sacred Law of Islam; the totality of practices required of all Muslims.

Siddiqun: True Saints; the very highest among saints. Their exemplar is Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, may God be pleased with him.

Ṣirāṭ: The bridge stretched over Hell on the Day of Judgment, which all must attempt to cross as one of the manifestations of the judgment.

Sirr: Secret; the archetype of the being in the eternal Divine knowledge.

Subḥān'Allāh wa biḥamdih: "Transcendent (extolled and exalted) is God, and His is the praise."

Sunna: The pattern of life of the Blessed Prophet ﷺ which comprises the norm and example for his followers.

Sunna and *Jamāʿa:* The orthodox majority of Muslim scholars.

Tābiʿūn: The Followers; those who met the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ but not the Prophet himself.

Tajallī: The manifestation of one or more Divine Attributes.

Tarīqa: The Way of Sufism, or one particular order of Sufis.

Tawassul: To seek the assistance of a person of virtue in praying to God. One might say, for instance, "O Lord, by the status of so-and-so in Your sight, and by the blessing of his prayer, I ask You for such-and-such a thing."

Tawḥīd: Belief in God's Oneness and Uniqueness.

Umma: The world community of Islam.

Umra: The Lesser Pilgrimage to the Holy House in Makka, which may be accomplished at any time of year.

Waqf (plural, *awqāf*): Inalienable endowment, which is property that its original proprietor dedicates to the exclusive benefit of certain designated people or institutions. It remains so for as long after his death as certain stipulated conditions are maintained. Some *awqāf* that are still in existence date five or six centuries ago.

Walī: Saint; a Friend of God, enveloped in divine solicitude.

Wird: A regular spiritual exercise, usually a litany of *dhikr* (invocations and supplications), but also recitation of the Quran, ritual Prayers, and so on.

Wuḍū': The ablution required for ritual purification before most acts of worship.

Zakāt: The obligatory tax payable by Muslims to the needy.

PEOPLE CITED IN THE TEXT

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq: Closest Companion to the Prophet ﷺ and his first successor (d. 12 AH).

Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī: One of the six major hadith compilers (d. 275 AH).

Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nuʿmān: Founder of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, he taught in Baghdad, where he died and was buried in 150 AH.

Abū Hurayra: One of the most prolific hadith narrators among the Companions (d. 58 AH).

Abū'l-ʿĀliya: A Follower who heard from Ibn ʿAbbās, lived in Basra, and became a recognized expert on Quranic recitation, commentary, and hadith (d. 90 AH).

Abū'l-Dardā': Famous Companion, known for his asceticism. He died in Damascus in 32 AH.

Abū Haṣīn, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Dhariʿ: Well-known scholar of the sixth generation.

Abū Naḍra: A Follower who lived in Basra, was an expert in Quranic sciences, and died in 108 AH.

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī: One of the first to write a systematic treatise on

The names are listed alphabetically according to the name each person is best known by. We have omitted the *al-* preceding last names, but retained it in first names. Names beginning with *ibn* ("son of") or *Abū* ("father of") are duly listed under *ibn* and *Abū*. The form *Abū'l-* is *Abū al-* ("father of the") as it is pronounced.

Sufism. He spent the last years of his life in Makka, hence his title al Makkī, died there and was buried at the Ma'lā cemetery in 386 AH.

Abū Zubyān: Follower and transmitter of hadith.

Aḥmad ibn 'Īsā: Known as al-Imām al-Muhājir, the Emigrant, for being the first leading figure among the descendants of the Prophet ﷺ to emigrate from Iraq to Hadramawt, where his own descendants, who became known as al-Sāda al-'Alawiyyīn, the 'Alawī Sayyids, are to this day active in preserving and teaching the Sacred Law of Islam (d. 345 AH).

Anas ibn Mālik: Companion who served the Prophet ﷺ for most of his life in Madīna. He entered the Prophet's service at the age of ten and lived long to become one of the most prolific hadith narrators (d. 91 AH).

Anjasha al-Ḥabashī: Abyssinian servant of the Prophet ﷺ.

Ash'arī, Abū Mūsā al-: Famous Companion whose tribe, the Ash'arīs, came from the Yemen to join the Prophet ﷺ in Madīna (d. 42 AH).

Ash'arī, Abū'l Ḥasan al-: Third-century theologian who clarified and wrote down the creed of the majority of Muslims, *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*. His definition found so wide an acceptance among Muslims that it became synonymous with *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*, so that whenever a scholar is asked about his beliefs he finds it sufficient to say: "I am Ash'arī."

'Aṭṭās, Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-: Great 'Alawī scholar and saint. Born in Ḥurayda in 1257 AH he traveled to Makka, despite his blindness, to become the most brilliant student of Imam Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Daḥlān, the Shāfi'ī muftī of Makka at that time. He returned to Hadramawt to teach both inward and outward sciences till his death in 1334 AH.

'Aṭṭās, 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-: Great 'Alawī scholar and saint, master of Imām 'Abdallāh al-Ḥaddād. Ḥabīb 'Umar lived in Ḥurayda. He was blind, yet loved to move constantly among the villages to teach. He died in 1072 AH.

'Aydarūs, Abū Bakr al-: Known as al-'Adanī because he left Tarīm, his father's hometown to settle in Aden where he died in 914 AH and where his tomb and mosque are still the spiritual hub of the city.

Bādhīb, Aḥmad ibn 'Umar: Hadramī scholar born in 1211 AH in the town of Shibām, which is the hometown of the Bādhīb clan of the great tribe of Kinda. He studied under numerous 'Alawī masters in various parts

of Hadramawt before emigrating to Singapore where he took office as judge, Imām of a mosque, and teacher of Islamic sciences, until his death in 1280 AH.

Barā' ibn Mālik al-: Anas ibn Malik's brother. He was a famous young warrior and ascetic. The Prophet ﷺ liked his voice and he chanted poems as they traveled in caravans. He was killed in battle in Tustar, in Persia, in 21 AH

Bayhaqī, Abū Bakr ibn Husayn al-: Famous Shāfi'ī scholar and hadith compiler who lived , taught, and died in Nishapur in 458 AH. Among his compilations are *al-Sunan al-Kubrā, al-Sunan al-Sughra, Shu'ab al-Īmān*, and *Dalā'il al-Nubūwwa.*

Bilāl ibn Rabāh: Famous African Companion who, as a slave in Makka, was cruelly tortured by his masters to force him to renounce his Islam, though he refused. He was eventually bought and set free by Abū Bakr. The Prophet ﷺ, whom he served very closely both in Makka and in Madīna, liked his voice and made him the principal caller of the *Adhan*. He died in Damascus in 20 AH.

Bukhārī, Muhammad ibn Isma'īl al-: Most famous of hadith compilers, his *sahīh [al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtasar]* is generally considered to be the most authentic book in existence after the Quran (d. 256 AH).

Busīrī, Sharaf al-Dīn Muhammad al-: Famous Egyptian scholar, Sufi, and poet, whose poems in praise of the Prophet ﷺ gained universal acceptance among Muslims, especially that entitled the *Burda* which soon became the most frequently chanted poem in Muslim gatherings all over the world. He died in Alexandria in 696 AH, and his seaside mosque and tomb are still visited to this day.

Dahhāk ibn Muzahim al-: Follower of the Followers, well known for being an expert in both Quran and hadith sciences. He was born and raised in Balkh and Merv, but lived for extended periods in Samarkand and Bukhāra (d. 105 AH).

Ghazālī, Abū Hāmid Muhammad al-: Known as "the Proof of Islam" for his powerful refutations of deviant Islamic and non Islamic cults and schools of thought, and his thorough exposition of serious Sufism in his many works, the most famous of which being *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, the *Revival of the Sciences of Religion.* He died in 505 AH in Tūs, near

present day Mashhad in northern Iran.

Habashī, ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-: Great ʿAlawī scholar, saint, and poet. Born in 1259 AH, he studied under his father, the then Shāfiʿī mufti of Makka, then spent the rest of his life in Hadramawt, in the town of Sayūn, where he died in 1333 AH and where his mausoleum now stands.

Ḥaddād, ʿAbdallāh ibn ʿAlawī al-: Renowned ʿAlawī scholar and saint who was born in Tarīm, Hadramawt, in 1044 AH, lost his sight three years later, then went on to become the undisputed master of both outward knowledge of the Sacred Law and inward knowledge of Sufism of his time (d. 1132 AH).

Ḥaddād, ʿAlawī ibn Ṭāhir al-: ʿAlawī scholar and saint who was born in Qaydūn in 1301 AH and became a close student of Ḥabīb Aḥmad ibn Ḥasan al-ʿAṭṭās. Later on he became co-founder of the *ribat*, the teaching school of Qaydūn. Finally he accepted the office of muftī of the Malayan sultanate of Johore, where he died in 1382 AH.

Ḥaddād, Ṭāhir ibn ʿAlawī al-: ʿAlawī scholar born in Qaydun in 1328 AH. Studied in Qaydun and in Indonesia, but mostly under his father, Ḥabīb ʿAlawī ibn Ṭāhir, Johore's grand muftī. Later on he was to accept office as judge in Aden till his death in 1394 AH.

Ḥaddār, Aḥmad ibn Muḥsin al-: Great ʿAlawī scholar and saint. Born in Indonesia in 1279 AH, he spent most of his adult life in Southern Yemen and died in 1357 AH in the port of Mukallā where his mausoleum still exists.

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī al-: Sometimes known as al-Ḥasan ibn Abī'l-Ḥasan: Leading Follower, brought up in the house of Umm Salama, one the Prophet's widows ﷺ. Major scholar and saint and link between Imam ʿAlī and most Sufi chains (d. 110 AH).

Ḥassān ibn Thābit: Most gifted of the Prophet's poets. He won every poetic challenge against the pagans. The Prophet ﷺ ordered a pulpit placed in the mosque for him to stand on and recite his poetry in defense of Islam. He died in Madīna at the age of 120 years in 30 AH.

Ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAbdallāh: The Prophet's cousin, his father being ʿAbbās, the Prophet's paternal uncle. The Prophet ﷺ patted ʿAbdallāh on the chest once, saying, "O God, grant him the understanding of religion and teach

him interpretation [of the Quran]." He became known as the Nation's Prime Scholar (*habr al-umma*). He died at Taif in 68 AH.

Ibn Abī Laylā, 'Abd al-Raḥmān: A leading Follower who lived in Kūfa (d. 83 AH).

Ibn 'Aṭiyya: A leading Quranic commentator who lived in Damascus (d. 383 AH).

Ibn al-Jazarī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (d. 833 AH): Famous scholar and authority on Quranic recitation. His works are still standard texts on the subject. He died in Damascus.

Ibn Kathīr: Shāfi'ī scholar well versed in both Quranic sciences and hadith. His Quran commentary is one of the best liked and most often used (d. 774 AH).

Ibn Mas'ūd, 'Abdallāh: One the very first Companions to accept Islam in Makka, he never left the side of the Prophet ﷺ and was well known as one of the best reciters of the Quran.

Jābir ibn Samura: Companion, nephew of Sa'd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ. He died in Syria in 74 AH.

Jarīr al-Bajalī: Companion who emigrated from the eastern shores of the Arabian peninsula to Madīna. It is recorded that the Prophet ﷺ never saw him without smiling at him and never refused him audience. He moved to Kirghizia during the civil war, then returned to Kūfa where he died in 51 AH.

Juwaynī, Abū'l-Ma'ālī al-: Leading scholar, given the title "Imām al-Ḥaramayn" by his contemporaries. Teacher of Imām al-Ghazālī (d. 478 AH).

Khālid ibn al-Walīd: The most famous general among the Companions. Called "a Drawn Sword of the Swords of God" by the Prophet ﷺ. He died in Homs, in Syria in 21 AH.

Labīd: Famous pre-Islamic Arab poet.

Madhar, 'Abdallāh ibn Ja'far: 'Alawī scholar and saint who spent twenty years of his life in Delhi, India, then moved to Makka where he taught in the Sacred Mosque until he died in 1160 AH.

Makhlūf, Ḥasanayn Muḥammad: Late Egyptian scholar and muftī.

Maymūn ibn Mihrān: Follower, renowned for his piety and asceticism (d. 117 AH).

Mu'ādh ibn Jabal: One of the most knowledgeable Companions; he died in his thirties in Syria in 18 AH.

Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj: Hadith compiler whose book is the second most authentic hadith compilation (*ṣaḥīḥ*) after Bukhārī. He died in 261 AH in Nishapur, in northern Iran.

Nadr ibn Shumayl al-: Well-known scholar and transmitter of hadith of the fourth generation, that following the Companions, the Followers, and the Followers of the Followers.

Nawawī, Yaḥya ibn Sharaf al-: One of the most celebrated scholars of all time, he wrote several compilations and commentaries on compilations of hadith, but his major work is a monumental work on jurisprudence, following the school of Imam al-Shāfi'ī (d. 676 AH).

Nu'man ibn Bashīr al-: First newborn to the tribe of Khazraj after the arrival of the Prophet ﷺ to Madina and narrator of some hadiths of the Prophet ﷺ. He was assassinated in Homs in Syria in 64 AH.

Qatāda ibn Di'ama: Follower who lived in Basra. He was blind and well known for his knowledge of Quran commentary. He died in Wasit in 117 AH.

Qārī, Mullā 'Alī: Hanafi scholar. Born in Herat; he lived in Makka, where he became a prolific writer, producing works on *fiqh*, hadith, *tafsīr*, *kalām*, Sufism, and history (d. 1014 AH).

Qushayrī, Abu'l-Qasim al-: Famous Sufi whose treatise *al-Risāla*, one of the earliest expositions of Sufism, is still taught to this day in Sufi circles (d. 465 AH).

Saqaṭī, al-Sarī al-: Famous early Sufi master, mentioned by Qushayrī in his treatise. He was Imām Junayd's maternal uncle and spiritual master (d. 251 AH).

Sha'bī, 'Āmir al-: Leading Follower who taught in Kūfa where he died in 104 or 105 AH.

Shādhilī, Abū'l-Hasan al-: Illustrious founder of the Shadhilī *ṭarīqa*. He died in Egypt in 656 AH.

Sha'rānī, 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-: Famous Egyptian Azhar scholar and saint and a prolific writer on both outward and inward knowledge (d. 973 AH).

Shāfi'ī, Imām Muhammad ibn Idrīs al-: Founder of the Shāfi'ī school of jurisprudence. The rules he laid down for a muftī to follow to reach a sound legal verdict remain the basis of all subsequent efforts in this field. He died in Cairo in 204 AH.

Suhrawardī, Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar al-: Famous Sufi shaykh who lived in Baghdad and was a contemporary of shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. His *'Awārif al-Ma'ārif* remains one of the most widely recommended expositions of the technique and courtesies of Sufism (d. 632 AH).

Tirmidhī, Abū 'Īsā al-: One of the major six hadith compilers. Author of al-*Jāmi' al-Sahīh*, as well as other well known works (d. 297 AH).

Usāma ibn Zayd: Companion whose father, Zayd ibn Hāritha, had been a freed slave of the Prophet, then his adopted son, until revelation abolished formal adoption. At the age of sixteen Usāma was given command over an army including many of the older Companions (d. 54 AH).

Wahb ibn Munabbih: Follower from Yemen, famous for his knowledge of Jewish lore (d. 113 AH).